UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

LIVING WELL WITH WORRIES, HUMILITY, AND OTHER PEOPLE: LEARNING TO REFLECT ON LIFE WITH THE *ANALECTS*

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

WENHUI XIE

Norman, Oklahoma

2022

Downloaded from SHAREOK. Persistent Handle URL: https://hdl.handle.net/11244/335702

LIVING WELL WITH WORRIES, HUMILITY, AND OTHER PEOPLE:
LEARNING TO REFLECT ON LIFE WITH THE *ANALECTS*

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

Dr. Amy Olberding, Chair

Dr. Nancy Snow

Dr. Wayne Riggs

Dr. Hugh Benson

Dr. Geoffrey Goble

© Copyright by WENHUI XIE 2022

All Rights Reserved.

For my loving family, dear friends, and inspiring teachers who made me who I am

And the fantastic Oklahoma weather that periodically encourages me to finish early

Contents

Acknowledgements vi
Abstract x
Introduction 1
Between in and out of Control 1
Dissertation Papers 11
Paper 1: Worries in My Heart: Defending the Significance of You 憂 for Confucian Moral Cultivation 14
Abstract 14
1: Introduction 15
2: Scholarly Debates 16
3: A Contour on Learning to Worry Well 24
4: The Elephant in the Room, Conclusion, and Implications 37
Bibliography 43
Paper 2**:** Confucian Humility in the *Analects* 45
1. Abstract and Introduction 45
2. Four Recent Papers on Confucian Humility 46
3. My View on Confucian Humility in the Analects 55
3.1 First Strand of Confucian Humility: Vigilance Rooted in Loving Learning 55
3.2. Second Strand of Confucian Humility: Devotion to Responsibility 62
3.3. On the Significance of *Li* 禮 69
4. Implications and Conclusion 73
Bibliography 76
Paper Three: How We Need Others: A Defense of Strong Relational Virtue 77
1. Introduction 77
2. Preliminary Reflections on Intimate and Deep Relationships 77
3. Relational Response and Relational Virtue 86
4. Caveats and Qualifications 96
5. Conclusion and Implications 101
Bibliography 105
Conclusion 106

Acknowledgements

Tang Junyi 唐君毅 first put into my mind that whatever philosophy is, it is not an intellectual game. It should be about something more significant than a demonstration or competition of intelligence. Mu Xin 木心 with his lively and luring Chinese writing impressed upon me how profound thoughts can be conveyed in lucid, beautiful, and easily digestable language. Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 left in my mind that there is such a study properly titled "the learning and questioning about life 生命的學問," a phrase that I heard since undergraduate when pondering upon the Greeks, but lacked any meaningful understanding until much later. Xu Fuguan 徐復觀, Goethe, Gu Sui 顧隨, Nietzsche, Bernard Williams, the old pal of Plato with whom I wrestled during undergraduate, and the thinkers and writers who have contributed to and brightened my meager existence cannot be enumerated. Oh, heaven 天 has blissed me with luck and enabled me to read and learn from them with helps of my teachers. May heaven 天 continue to bliss me so I can continue to learn and do my share of contribution to those who come after me.

Beyond the broad sentiment of blissed learning opportunities, there are certain people, events, and practices that I must single out for sake of recording my current stage of life, and none comes before my dear family. In addition to all the sacrifices my mom and dad have done, I finally come to see them inside me. That sunny, cheerful side of mine that lifts me out during my worst encounters and prevents me from slipping into the abyss of habituated complaints and disappointments is not my making. Part of it comes from my mom's gene. The relentless, incessant striving that annoys others and myself but also improves who I am is not my making. I

have that from my dad's influence. And my younger brother, who has grown to be so dependable, gives me joy, annoyance and above all, companionship that never leaves my heart even when I am thousands of miles away. My aunt Julia Liqing Zhong, Likui Zhou, my uncle Xiaoxiang Zhong, and my cousins Jesse Ziyang Zhong and Jody Ziyi Zhong offer me strong and caring kinships that gives me warmth, support, and longing. Together, they form the background of my existence in this world, and I am fortunate to be related to them.

Fangming, my first love whose heart I remorsefully broke, teaches me love, intimacy and care in fierce amore and with a gentle soul. My stupendous younger self knows not what is valuable and fortune, a lesson that the current self reflects upon and write about in this dissertation.

My prolonged martial art training has gradually revealed itself to be as great a source of enjoyment as it is a benefactor. What I put in falls woefully short of what it gives me. I am grateful for its contribution to my physical and mental health, and the unexpected life lessons. Great martial artists speak truly about what martial arts can do. It is nothing short of an art that can transform the whole of who one is.

The philosophical training I received under the analytic tradition in the U.S. has injected into that moody, sensitive kid of my younger self a dose of formality and rationality, and turned him into someone who can think and speak orderly about intellectual and emotional matters. Despite all my reservations about the analytic tradition, I am grateful for the balance it has helped me attain.

And of course, almost nothing is left untouched by the great happening of Covid. Living my last years of graduate school with Covid leaves me endless thoughts that I know not how to

express. The first hasty realization is the Confucian orientation that truly, I am a social animal, a realization that propels me to make myself available to social lives more willingly (and perhaps relentlessly) during this past year than previous graduate school years. Then another Confucian message hits me with unmistakable force, that people are troubles. Perhaps stronger than that, people are burdensome. Nonetheless, having friends and families, relationships and connections is a burden better present than absent. It is a problem that, among all the problems one can encounter, is a better problem of life.

Many of these reflections took place during the numerous conversations I had with my dear advisor Dr. Amy Olberding and dear friend Aron Burnett. Amy's support and tolerance gave me both the resources and the space to grow on my own accord. Aron's companionship is always heartening, entertaining, and intellectually stimulating. My other committee members, Dr. Wayne Riggs, Dr. Nancy Snow, Dr. Hugh Benson, and Dr. Geoffrey Goble have offered their support as well. In particular, Wayne always made himself available for conversations. Dear Nancy graciously agreed to join the committee at the last minute and offered me invaluable comments and helps. Spotlights must also include our department secretary Mr. Gabriel Serrano and Mrs. Shelley Konieczny. Dear Gabe has been as patient and supportive as he is wise and entertaining. He is a backbone of my Ph.D. program in terms of logistical struggles and daily conversations. Shelley is always ready to offer her smiley face from the financial matrix laid by institutional nonsense, and always fixes our financial problems for us without even saying no. It is shared departmental knowledge that without Gabe and Shelley's help, our lives as graduate students would have been unimaginable. Last but not least, in addition to my department mates, Jordan Droira, Babak Mohammadizadeh Khoshroo, Stephanie Holt, Conor McMahon, Cheryl Frazier, and Jeremy Fried, I am fortunate to have made more new friends in the last year of my

Ph.D. life than I had in all previous years combined. Elena Ricci, Laura Matesanz, Joaquin Martinez, Laura Alejandra Gomez, Cristian Jimenez, Guo Fenghua 郭風華, Li Shuangshuang 李雙雙, Jiang Yajun 姜亞君, Fan Ziqi 範子琪, you all are the bright surprises of my last year of Ph.D. life. I thank you for the food and drinks, laughter and bickering, conversations and companionship, and above all, your unique, lovely souls.

Abstract

In this dissertation, I present three distinct papers connected through the theme of control.

The *Analects* suggests a view of control or human efficacy that we have a great deal of control over events related to us. But our control is often partial, limited, and indeterminate. It suggests, in other words, a continuum of control that goes from having (relatively) full control over certain things to having (relatively) no control over certain things, with a middle section where we exert partial and indeterminate amount of control. Operating under this model of control, I develop and argue for three theses regarding 1) the emotion of worry when our control and concern over things should go beyond a small set; 2) humility when we are humbled by the challenge of self-cultivation and others' contributions; and 3) relational virtue when we give up a certain control and let others partially determine not just what we do, but who we are.

In the first paper, I argue that in the *Analects*, learning to worry well is part and parcel of the Confucian cultivation program, and it includes learning to worry broadly about non-related others, and deeply about intimate others.

In the second paper, I argue that in the *Analects*, humility is about ritually expressed vigilance developed from a strong desire for cultivating oneself and devotion to responsibilities that honor forerunners and check against misanthropy.

In the third paper, I argue that relational virtues that characterize being a good friend, spouse, sibling, or child require more than the agent's disposition, but also acknowledgement from intimate others, and in unfortunate situations, public acknowledgement and evaluation. To be relationally virtuous, the agent does not fully determine whether she is virtuous or not.

Introduction

This dissertation consists of three separate papers that roughly center around one problem: What do we do when we do not have full control (of the outcome of our actions, our emotions, or even who we are)? Behind this vague and general question is a distinction between "what is within my control" and "what falls outside of my control" that is employed as a way to understand and react to life circumstances since the antiquity of early Greece and China. The standard answer to the question is to use the conceptual distinction to create a dichotomy of life that understands life events in two separate and contrasting groups, and only pay attention to the group of events that fall within my control. My focus is on the Chinese, and in particular, the *Analects*' side of the story. The one-line summary that lays the backdrop of this dissertation is that the distinction is not a fitting conceptual apparatus for understanding the *Analects*, for the text suggests a continuum of control, rather than a clear-cut dichotomy of control. First, allow me to elaborate and defend this claim. Once that is done, I move on to describe how the three papers connect to this claim.

Between in and out of Control

The *Analects* does not have passages or concepts that can be straightforwardly mapped onto the dichotomy between what lies within my control and what lies outside. Nonetheless, it remains a popular heuristic used by many scholars to analyze the *Analects* descriptively and normatively. For instance, Edward Slingerland, Yu Jiyuan, and more recently, Yuet Keung Lo and Yao Xinzhong have all employed this distinction in their analyses of the *Analects*.[1]

[1] Many other scholars also consider this view to be the standard view of early Confucianism in general. See for instance, Perkins, 2008; Hwang, 2013; Wang, 2019. See Luo 2019 47-51 for a subtle yet important variation of this view that does not consider uncontrollable goals irrelevant. See Huff 2016 for a dissenting view.

Slingerland argues that the *Analects* utilizes a dichotomy of the "inner-outer" *nei*/*wai* 內外 realm to guide learners' attention in moral cultivation. The outer realm consists of such matters as "life and death, fame and disgrace, wealth and poverty," all of which are subject to forces of *ming* 命, or roughly, fate, and therefore, are "beyond the bounds of proper human endeavor."[2] In contrast, the inner realm is the realm relating to one's character and virtue, which lies fully within one's control. The *Analects*' suggestion is that agents should focus on the inner realm and the goods obtainable only in the inner realm – such as the pleasure found in conducting virtuous activities. Yu Jiyuan similarly argues that "a virtuous or excellent person should not be disturbed by the lack of external goods" because these things "could not be controlled or altered by a human agent, regardless of whether he or she is virtuous."[3] Instead, she "enjoys peace of mind and experiences no worries, fear and inner conflict (A, 4:4, 12:4)."[4] Yao Xinzhong cites a different passage of 16.5 and argues that Confucius makes a distinction between "beneficial joy and harmful joy" that corresponds to roughly, the joy of virtuous living and the pleasure of fulfilling material needs and desires.[5] Only the first kind is the true joy that is lasting and deeply satisfying. Yuet Keung Lo attends to a different set of problems in the *Analects* that can plague learners, namely, the lack of recognition by others. Lo thinks that this presents the greatest challenge to cultivation, and argues that learners should confront such a challenge by recognizing that they engage in the project of *self*-cultivation, the fulfillment and completion of which cannot be compromised by lack of recognition by others.

[2] Slingerland, "The Conception of Ming in Early Confucian Thought," 568.
[3] Yu, *The Ethics of Confucius and Aristotle*, 186–87.
[4] Yu, 187.
[5] Yao, "Joy, Wisdom and Virtue—The Confucian Paradigm of Good Life," 229.

Scholars' discussions fill out the details of the two contrasting categories of "within agent's control" versus "not in agent's control." Things and events that go beyond the limited power of agent include, as scholars suggest, recognition of others, wealth and social status, and another standard item that is not mentioned here, namely, the order of states and peace in the world in general. The last item in particular does seem to fall out of any agent's control, including rulers of particular states. This establishes one part of the dichotomy. Regarding the other group, i.e., the items under agent's control, scholars generally put moral cultivation as an unquestionable example. While moral cultivation certainly requires individual effort, what exactly about moral cultivation that is (relatively) clearly dependent upon agent requires further specification, for it is a well-recognized feature of a Confucian moral cultivation program that cultivation requires other people's contribution and support.[6] I contend that "*zhi* 志," a word that can be both noun and verb, and has to do with (setting) goals and aim, fits this category.

Zhi can mean setting one's mind on something with determination where the aim is value-neutral (14.36). The most frequent and interesting cases, however, indicate that *zhi* is a personal aspiration that conveys and confers a self-image of who one is and wants to become (1.11, 2.4, 4.4, 4.9, 5.26, 7.6, 11.26, 15.9, 18.8, 19.6). As an aspiration of who one is and wants to become, a *zhi* is, roughly speaking, existential in its target. This means that a goal of getting a good grade in a class would not count as a *zhi* because it does not relate to self-identity. Being a good student, on the other hand, can be a *zhi* (albeit a "small" one in that the social identity of being a student is often only a small part in one's arc of life).

[6] See for instance, Wong 2013.

More importantly, a *zhi* is wholeheartedly endorsed, which involves first, a knowledge requirement of sorts. The agent needs to know enough about the content, requirements, and some of the entailments (such as sacrifices) of pursuing the goal. She needs to grasp a sense of the existential "weight" the goal demands of her were she to pursue that goal.[7] Put concretely, she needs to have more than an intellectual grasp that being a proper good student requires devoting time to study, but a bit of existential understanding of what that *zhi* would make her become, say, among her friends. Among other things, her friends may not invite her to certain activities that they consider to be not "her jam," *if* she becomes a proper good student. Second, wholehearted endorsement involves a certain endorsement based on an understanding of the goal (i.e., the first component), namely, self-identification. The specific content of a *zhi* might be inspired by others, which is the case of Kongzi's students. However, a *zhi* must be taken to be one's own, which accompanies motivation and desire that originate from oneself. It is a requirement where the agent needs to take initiative in determining who she wants to become. For this reason, a properly established *zhi* gives direction to one's life,[8] regulates one's conducts and practices, and reinforces self-identity. *Analects* 18.8 comments that Boyi 伯夷 and Shuqi 叔齐 belong to those who "do not taint their *zhi* nor bring indignity to themselves 不降其志, 不辱其身." Protecting one's *zhi* amounts to protecting one's integrity and self-identity. Similarly, in 5.26 and 11.26, Kongzi asks his students to speak of their *zhi*-s. He receives answers that are about what the students want to become. This indicates that *zhi* relates to self-identity in terms of a self-image

[7] It is a knowledge requirement of sort because such knowledge is not merely intellectual or cognitive, but involves intimate, personal understanding of what an aspiration involves and entails. Needless to say, this understanding required for wholehearted endorsement is not a perfect understanding, which would be implausible and thus, an inappropriate requirement.

[8] Shun, "Early Confucian Moral Psychology."

that one wants to protect or to become. In summary, a *zhi* is a self-endorsed view of who one is that the agent either wants to hold dear and protect, or work upon and become.

While *zhi* has other important features - for instance, *zhi* requires corresponding effort, dedication, and certain sacrifices to differentiate it from an aspiration of the same content, it is this personal nature of *zhi* that makes it lie within an agent's control. The agent can be uncertain about certain goals, vacillate between goals, have no goals or give up on certain goals. Others can greatly encourage or frustrate one's *zhi*. However, nobody can make an agent endorse and identify with certain goals, regardless of how strong the force is. The agent can verbally express endorsement and identification under great pressure but does not change her mind despite verbal concession. This is because genuine endorsement and identification are psychological activities that cannot be forced by others, but only initiated by the agent. This is one reason why Kongzi says "The arrays of armies can have their general taken away. A commoner cannot have his *zhi* taken away. 三軍奪帥也，匹夫不可奪志也" (9.26). While commentators point out the significance of cultivation for guarding one's *zhi*, this passage can be read as speaking about the nature of endorsement and identification.[9] Once a *zhi* is established, it takes root in one's motivation and self-identity and becomes one's own. It cannot be taken away by a command, an order or by pressure, unless the agent gives up on it and thereby, loses a part of who she is. This

[9] See Cheng. The psychological phenomenon of being able to guard one's *zhi* is complex. It is, in my opinion, a mistake to understand this phenomenon in terms of will power, that those who can guard their *zhi* has strong will power, and those who fail do not. It oversimplifies the matter because being deprived of one's *zhi* can happen in many ways, some of which cannot be satisfyingly explained by simply saying that "the agent lacks will power (or does not have strong will power)." The persistent temptation of (political) power takes away one's *zhi* in a way that is significantly different from the corrosive and numbing effect of poverty. It also obscures what cultivation does. Cultivation does more than simply increase will power but brings about strategies and resources to deal with different situations that present challenge to following one's *zhi*. Lastly, it also obscures the psychological feature that I discuss, that endorsement and identification cannot be forced. Weak or strong, will power does not change this feature.

psychological weight and mechanism under which *zhi* operates make it a matter of one's control, or at least, one of the better examples there is.[10]

The discussion so far has shown why the dichotomy between what falls in and out of my control is commonly used – it organizes the *Analects* in a way that usefully highlights some important aspects of the *Analects.* My disagreement, therefore, is not that there is no textual support for this interpretation. Rather, my disagreement centers on how exhaustive and useful the dichotomy is in organizing the whole text. It seems to me that the text contains cases that fall into the middle area between the extremes of having and lacking (more or less complete) control. In this middle area, humans have an indeterminate amount of control. This means that there are situations in life where we indeed have control, but only to a degree that cannot be clearly determined and remains deeply uncertain. If I am right, the dichotomy should be replaced by a continuum of control, for the latter retains what the former offers yet better captures content of the text that does not fit the former. Having said this, allow me to elaborate on one prominent set of middle-ground cases in the *Analects*, the interactions between Kongzi and his students.

Kongzi has a certain level of control over his students in multiple areas of their lives. This does not mean that Kongzi absolutely dictates what his students do. Nonetheless, he clearly exerts significant influence on his students' behavior, cultivation of characters and even (political) careers. Students would consult Kongzi's opinion before they take actions (11.22). They also receive guidance on cultivation (6.30), comments on their characters (5.12, 9.27), and recommendations to rulers (5.8). One dramatic example speaks about Kongzi's severe criticism

[10] Clearly, a lot more can and needs to be said about *zhi*. For instance, I have left open how *zhi* is actually formed (i.e., establishing a *zhi* 立志), what the psychological process involves, the ways in which a *zhi* can be changed, what cultivation does to a *zhi*, and some of the important topics raised by traditional commentators, such as, guarding one's *zhi* 守志, being deprived of one's *zhi* 奪志, etc.

of Zaiyu 宰予 for sleeping in the daytime, a behavior that is not only trivial, but highly personal in a way that makes Kongzi's anger and criticism seem bizarre and jarring (at least on the surface). Another dramatic example shows that Kongzi ostracizes Ranqiu 冉求, a student who has already found his own career (11.17). Indeed, to our modern eyes, Kongzi's involvement in students' lives may appear overly intimate and his influence overbearing.

However, the control Kongzi has over his students is also limited. The true intended object of Kongzi's control and influence is nothing less than cultivating the characters of his students. Genuine improvement of character, however, requires initiation and personal engagement from students and cannot be made to happen by external forces of any kind. While both Kongzi and his students are involved in this matter of character development, the project, after all, is a personal project of the students. As great and caring a teacher as Kongzi can be, he cannot make personal improvements on behalf of his students. This sets an unbreachable limit to Kongzi' s influence on his students.

In this set of cases, neither Kongzi nor his students have full control. On the one hand, Kongzi offers guidance that shapes the course of students' character development. From behavior to basic values to the life direction of *zhi*, Kongzi influences all these aspects of his students. On the other hand, it falls upon the students to take initiative and make improvements. If they do not take on the project, no one can do anything about it. Thus, even though the project is character improvement of *students*, it is a project where both Kongzi and his students participant and neither has full control over it.

Nor is it clear the level of control each party can have. Kongzi clearly cannot develop students' character for themselves. But it remains a live question as to whether doing more can

help or whether his influence is already too prominent. *Analects* 9.27 depicts such a scenario. Kongzi praises Zilu as someone who, dressed in shabby gown, does not feel shame when standing next to someone dressed in furs. Zilu takes the praise and repeats it over and over again (終身誦之), to which point Kongzi responds that the praise should not be treasured as such. Presumably, it is a moment of delight *and* lament for Kongzi: While it is a source of great joy to see a student who has developed a robust value structure that guides his sense of shame and worthiness, it is a pity to see the student hold on to the teacher's praise, treasure it, and not let it go. The possible lament goes deeper and invites a reflection on Kongzi's influence as a teacher. Kongzi clearly has a profound influence on Zilu. If the praise were given by someone else, it is doubtful that Zilu would treasure it to a similar extent. Kongzi's response indicates that he is aware of the negative impact his influence has on Zilu and is sufficiently troubled by it that he ends up commenting about it. The text does not offer further details on why Kongzi feels the need to expressly comment on Zilu's obsession. We may guess that perhaps Zilu gets "hung up" on Kongzi's praise. Perhaps he continues to behave in ways that align with Kongzi's praise, forgetting that the praise is supposed to be encouragement for further development, rather than setting some authoritative constraints on what to do. Perhaps Zilu starts seeking Kongzi's praise and forgets that the goal should not be getting praise from a dear teacher, but to improve oneself. This passage, therefore, bespeaks a struggle that Kongzi has in teaching his students – that it is not always clear how much he should exert his influence and control. More importantly, it is not always clear to what degree his influence indeed makes a positive difference (rather than impeding student's improvement). While he could try his best to give encouragement when appropriate and offer criticisms when necessary, he has no way of controlling how his students

will respond to his encouragement or criticisms. Therefore, in terms of making a genuine positive influence, it is perplexing and uncertain how much control Kongzi has.

A similar uncertainty is present in terms of the students, but for different reasons. While the project concerns the character development of the students, students also lack a clear sense of control over their own character development. One reason is that on their own, it is very difficult for them to see their own problems. Assuming that the effort and desire to improve oneself are present, there remains a high possibility of repeating one's own problems when one is left to learn alone. In fact, it is hard to truly see one's problem even with criticisms from a teacher. A case in point is Zigong 子貢. Zigong is criticized by Kongzi for making judgments of others (14.29). Kongzi says that that Zigong must be a worthy gentleman, for he himself has no time for judging others (14.29). It is easy to miss where the criticism lies. Making judgments of other people is but a common practice that is recorded throughout the text. The mistake that Zigong commits, therefore, is not about the practice of judging others, but a failure to keep in mind that the point of judging others is to learn from others rather than, say, looking down upon others. Judging others may just be one manifestation of a deeper issue, that Zigong is less fond of learning than appearing to be learned. We may further postulate that if Zigong does not recognize and rectify this deeper problem regarding the attitude of learning, stopping the practice of judging others is merely a surface level fix and does not make a genuine improvement. While he may stop judging others, he commits other mistakes rooted in a problematic learning attitude, such as ostentatious display of oneself through language (5.12). In short, even though any progress of character development can only be made by the students, students do not achieve significant development on their own.

In summary, regarding the set of cases where Kongzi interacts with his students with a goal of helping students cultivate their characters, both parties have certain levels of control. Yet the project is by its nature dependent upon both parties and neither have the full, determining influence as if one of them alone can "complete" the project in any relevant sense. If my analysis so far is on the right track, it shows that there are cases where, focusing on individuals, no one has full control or lack full control. Rather, both Kongzi and his students have degrees of control that cannot be clearly demarcated. Furthermore, there are many more cases where individuals lie between in and out of control. To identify other cases, it is important to extract one key feature from the cases above, namely, interdependence.

Interdependence exists in situations where progress, success, or failure of the matter at hand rely on contributions of more than one party in some significant way. In such situations, each party has a degree of meaningful influence on how the matter will turn out. So long as no single party has dominating, deciding influence, everyone depends on others for carrying the project forward. Even if the matter at hand is highly personal, such as character cultivation, to the extent that one needs and relies on others, to that extent one lacks full control. Put succinctly, wherever interdependence is present, individuals have but limited amount of control.

The *Analects* pays attention to interdependence and to cases that lie between fully in and out of agent's control. If this is on the right track, using the dichotomy of control to interpret the *Anlaects* is a much less useful categorization than it has been taken to be. Instead, I contend that we should replace the dichotomy between what falls in and out of agent's control with a continuum of control to analyze the *Analects*.

There are at least two levels of implications following from this interpretive shift and modified analytical tool for understanding the *Analects*. Note that the traditional dichotomy

presents a neat story at both the descriptive and normative level. Not only can we categorize all events in the two contrasting categories of "control" and "lack of control," we also have a clear normative message that we should pay attention to the "control" category. One implication of my modified analytic tool is descriptive. As the above discussion shows, a continuum of control allows us to have a more nuanced understanding of what the text offers. The *Analects* presents examples in the middle ground where agents have a limited yet indeterminate amount of control.

The other implication is normative, and the story becomes messy and unclear. The three papers I offer here present initial steps in elaborating some of the normative implications.

Dissertation Papers

One of the more direct normative implications for replacing the dichotomy of control with a continuum of control is an expansion of what needs to be taken into consideration. The old story suggests that we only need to consider and care about the (quite) limited amount of things what we can control and leave aside all that we cannot control. The new story suggests that we have a lot more control over a lot more things, although our control is most often partial. This means that we need to care about a lot more things than what is suggested by the old story, and how we care about them is also quite different. Relatedly, the old story suggests a relatively clear picture of sage-hood, where sages would, through their dedicated focus on what falls within their power and a lack of concern and worry over all that they cannot control, attain a kind of equanimity that allows them to live through the turmoil of life unscathed. What would the new story say about sage-hood, if sages are not the kind who psychologically retreat to a small citadel of secured control, but care about a great many things for which they are partially, but only partially, responsible? What would their emotional life look like in terms of worries and joy? In the first paper, I take a small step in beginning to answer these and related questions, telling a story about

the emotion of worry. I argue that for Confucian cultivation, learning to worry well is a core part of the development program, which includes two general directions of learning to worry broadly and deeply.

Another issue that arises from the replacement of the old analytical apparatus is a sense of humility. Humility is the topic of the second paper. Already present in the discussion of the middle area of the control continuum is an understanding that attaining any serious improvement of oneself is hard, and we are highly limited on our own for even improving ourselves. The more serious one becomes about self-improvement, the more one sees one's limitations and need for support from others. This is one strand of humility. Another strand of humility stems from an acknowledgement of our indebtedness to others and our capacity to influence others. Seeing how much we depend upon and owe others (especially to those who come before and benefited us), not only humbles us, but also gives us a sense of responsibility to behave in similar ways so that in our influence on others, we do not become a source of misanthropy. These two strands of humility form what I see as the "substance" of Confucian humility that is conveyed through the "form" of ritual. Together – namely, the two strands plus their expression through ritual, they consist of what I argue to be Confucian humility in the *Analects*.

While the first two papers are historical, the third paper engages with one contemporary debate. The issue for the third paper is about relational virtue. In contemporary discussions, virtue, both the cultivation and especially the cumulative achievement of possessing the virtue, has a tendency of being treated as an individualistic matter. If an agent is said to have fully cultivated herself, her virtue is supposed to be fully her own. Some scholars have argued that relational virtue – virtues that make agents excellent participants in relationships – is the same, that it is a sub-category of virtue owned by the agent. This general way of thinking sits poorly

with our living experience of being involved in relationships, which seems a prime example that falls in the middle of the control continuum. The intuition is simple. If I tell someone that I am a good friend of Kim and Kim denies it, the third person can reasonably question my claim (as long as Kim is an overall trustworthy person). This kind of example proliferates in considering relationships, because we all intuitively know and agree that the other person or people involved in a relationship have a legitimate say in determining whether we have been good relationship participants or not. How to spell out the implications of this intuition in terms of relational virtue is the project of the third paper. I argue that relational virtue requires more than an agent's disposition, but acknowledgement from bonded or related others, and in some extreme cases, the participation of public evaluation

Paper 1: Worries in My Heart: Defending the Significance of You 憂 for Confucian Moral Cultivation

Abstract

While the conversations surrounding moral cultivation in Confucianism often focus on the debate regarding the starting point of moral learning (and corresponding features of the learning process) that is inspired by the disagreements between the *Mengzi* and the *Xunzi*,[1] there is another group of scholarship on moral cultivation which tends to the experiential qualities felt by the learning agents.[2] This paper participates in the latter group of scholarship. The majority of discussions regarding the learning experience centers around mental states such as *an* 安 /tranquility or equanimity and *le* 樂/happiness, joy, or pleasure of a special kind. There is, nonetheless, a minor trend that emphasizes the significance of *you* 憂/worry or distress. In this paper, I raise attention to the significance of *you* and argue that in the *Analects*, an indispensable and significant part of Confucian moral cultivation is to learn to worry well, which involves learning to worry broadly about society in general, and to worry deeply about particular individuals standing in important relationship to us.

Keyword: *Analects*, *you* 憂/worry, Confucian moral cultivation, the method of extension, the method of intensification

[1] While this paper is not focused on *xing*, I will briefly address relevant issues in section 3.1.

[2] Throughout the paper, I use "learning 學" and "moral cultivation" interchangeably. While it is clear that the *Analects* depicts a wide range of learning objects, some of which, such as charioteering, does not have much to do with morality, it is uncontroversial that the most important learning is moral cultivation. Hence, "learning" is used as a shorthand for moral cultivation, except in cases where I make special note.

1: Introduction

The scholarship on moral cultivation unanimously agree that the experiential qualities felt by a virtuous person is that of *an* 安 and *le* 樂. She is capable of remaining steadfast and equanimous when facing great moral challenges and experiencing joy and profound happiness with what life has to offer. The learning process, therefore, attends to ways that allow learners to remain composed against challenges, and develop nuanced senses of pleasure. This much is and ends the consensus. Questions such as how the end state of *an* 安 and *le* 樂 can be achieved, whether there are other important elements in addition to *an* 安 and *le* 樂, and what the process of moral cultivation is like continue to attract debates.

Focusing on the *Analects*, one group of the experiential qualities that is conspicuously absent is the "negative" emotions. In contrast to an 安 and *le* 樂, these emotions invoke sensations that are unpleasant in various ways. They include *you* 憂/worry (2.6, 6.11, 7.3, 7.19, 9.29, 12.4, 12.5, 14.28, 15.12, 15.32), *yuan* 怨/ill will (4.12, 4.18, 5.23, 5.25, 7.15, 12.2, 14.1, 14.9, 14.10, 14.34, 14.35, 15.15), *qi* 戚/grief or deep worry (3.4, 7.37), *chi* 恥 /shame (1.13, 2.3, 4.9, 4.22, 5.15, 5.25, 8.13, 9.27, 13.20, 14.1, 14.27), *ru* 辱/disgrace (1.13, 4.26, 12.23, 13.20), *ai* 哀/sorrow (3.20, 3.26, 8.4), *lü* 慮/concerns (15.12), *ji* 疾/despise (8.10, 14.20, 15.20).[3] More importantly, these emotions matter to moral cultivation. Confucius is said to have worries (7.3). A *junzi* 君子/exemplary person is supposed to have a sense of shame (13.20). Experiencing grief is appropriate and important for mourning (3.4). These characters and passages, therefore, give readers a warranted impression that negative emotions are important for moral cultivation in a

[3] This is not meant to be an exhaustive list. Other potentially relevant characters include *sang* 喪, *ke* 克, *fa* 伐.

certain way. In what way exactly are these emotions important to moral cultivation? Focusing on *you* 憂/worry, I argue that worry is an indispensable part of Confucian moral cultivation, because developing oneself in the Confucian way implies learning to worry well, which involves learning to worry broadly about society in general, and to worry deeply about particular individuals standing in important relationship to us.

In what follows, I first introduce the scholarly debate in which I participate. Regarding this debate, I discuss what I call the standard view and the minor view. Then, I argue for the significance of worry through analyzing the process of moral cultivation and two methods of moral cultivation, namely, extension and intensification. Lastly, I discuss implications of my view.

2: Scholarly Debates

The scholarship on moral cultivation unanimously agree that the experiential qualities felt by a virtuous person is that of *an* 安 and *le* 樂. She is capable of remaining steadfast and equanimous when facing great moral challenges and experiencing joy and profound happiness with what life has to offer. The learning process, therefore, attends to ways that allow learners to remain composed against challenges, and develop nuanced senses of pleasure. This much is and ends the consensus. Questions such as how the end state of *an* 安 and *le* 樂 can be achieved, whether there are other important elements in addition to *an* 安 and *le* 樂, what the process of moral cultivation is like, and to the relevant degree, the details of the end state of moral cultivation continue to attract debates.

The standard view starts with the end stage of cultivation, which is made vivid in the self-depiction of Confucius, whose joy is remarkably powerful and makes him forget worries and the arrival of old age (7.19). The key aspects that make possible this kind of joy (and the overall

psychology) is a hierarchy of desires and a pattern of discernment. Confucius exemplifies a clear desire hierarchy. In words (4.5, 7.12, 7.16) and in deeds (15.2), he consistently and persistently values virtue over quotidian, mundane goods such as wealth, fame, and power. This hierarchy is often explained in relation to a pattern of discernment that effectively distinguishes what lies within one's control and can be reliably gained through personal effort, from what lies outside of one's control and cannot be reliably gained regardless of effort. The most important thing that is within one's control is development of character. Everything else, including wealth, status, fame, and recognition, cannot be reliably gained and therefore, should be systematically treated as less important and only cared for when the means of attainment are morally proper. Moral cultivation aims to develop learners to be someone like Confucius, and in particular, someone who shares a similar evaluative outlook (i.e., both the hierarchy of desires and the pattern of discernment). Learners should be able to withstand temptations and challenges presented by the desirable-yet-morally-irrelevant goods. It is, therefore, an arduous process of aligning desires, judgment, and emotions where one gradually roots out one's cares and worries associated with worldly, quotidian objects and redirects one's attention to developing an excellent character. While undoubtedly difficult, learning is understood to be an overall enjoyable process the culmination of which results in a matured agent who experiences no fear nor worry, but only tranquility and joy.

Many scholars, such as Edward Slingerland, Yu Jiyuan, and more recently, Yuet Keung Lo and Yao Xinzhong argue for this standard line of interpretation.[4] Slingerland's papers, while

[4] Yuet Keung Lo, "Confucius and His Community," in *Dao Companion to the Analects*, ed. Amy Olberding (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2014), 55–79, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7113-0_4; Ted Slingerland, "The Conception of Ming in Early Confucian Thought," *Philosophy East and West* 46, no. 4 (1996): 567–81, https://doi.org/10.2307/1399496; Xingzhong Yao, "Joy, Wisdom and Virtue—The Confucian Paradigm of Good Life," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 45, no. 3–4 (2018): 222–32, https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-6253.12358; Jiyuan Yu, *The Ethics of Confucius and Aristotle: Mirrors of Virtue*, Routledge Studies in Ethics and Moral Theory 7 (New

published early, is the most thorough and thus, representative of this line of interpretation. He argues that the *Analects* utilizes a dichotomy of the "inner-outer" *nei*/*wai* 內外 realm to guide learners' attention in moral cultivation. The outer realm consists of such matters as "life and death, fame and disgrace, wealth and poverty," all of which are subject to forces of *ming* 命, or roughly, fate, and therefore, are "beyond the bounds of proper human endeavor."[5] Dedicated learners should not be concerned about these matters because they "[divert] energy away from the process of self-cultivation, but is also pointless in a purely practical sense, since these things lie outside of human control."[6] In contrast, the inner realm is the realm relating to one's character and virtue, which lies fully within one's control. Focusing on the inner realm and the goods obtainable only in the inner realm – such as the pleasure found in conducting virtuous activities – the agent can learn to face the capriciousness of the outside world "with no worry or fear, bu you bu ju 不憂不懼" (12.4) and be satisfied with the joy found within.

Yu Jiyuan similarly argues that "a virtuous or excellent person should not be disturbed by the lack of external goods" because these things "could not be controlled or altered by a human agent, regardless of whether he or she is virtuous."[7] Instead, she "enjoys peace of mind and experiences no worries, fear and inner conflict (A, 4:4, 12:4)."[8] Yao Xinzhong cites a different passage of 16.5 and argues that Confucius makes a distinction between "beneficial joy and harmful joy" that corresponds to roughly, the joy of virtuous living and the pleasure of fulfilling material needs and desires.[9] Only the first kind is the true joy that is lasting and deeply

York: Routledge, 2007), 185–91.
[5] Slingerland, "The Conception of Ming in Early Confucian Thought," 568.
[6] Slingerland, 572–73.
[7] Yu, *The Ethics of Confucius and Aristotle*, 186–87.
[8] Yu, 187.
[9] Yao, "Joy, Wisdom and Virtue—The Confucian Paradigm of Good Life," 229.

satisfying. Yuet Keung Lo agrees with the consensus that the text has a clear "emphasis on delight in the experience of learning," but attends to a different set of problems that can plague learners, namely, the lack of recognition by others. As much as community is capable of bringing joy and delight to learners through companionship and collaborative activities, it can equally dishearten learners when one's true worth is "underappreciated, misunderstood, or simply neglected."[10] Lo thinks that this presents the greatest challenge to cultivation, and learners should confront such a challenge by recognizing that they engage in the project of *self*-cultivation, the fulfillment and completion of which cannot be compromised by lack of recognition by others. Difficult as it can be, learners can eventually achieve "spiritual homeostasis anchored in self-fulfillment and unruffled by lack of appreciation from his community."[11]

To summarize, the standard interpretation shares two characteristics: First, moral cultivation involves two key components, namely, a proper hierarchy of desires and the pattern of judgment that focuses on what one can control; and second, the agent gradually becomes worry-free and joyful through dedicated cultivation.

In contrast to the standard view, there is a minor trend in different Confucian texts and interpretations that emphasize the significance of worry, the most noticeable of which is the claim in *Mengzi* that "gentleman has life-long worries (about moral cultivation) 君子有終生之憂."(4B28) The text further elaborates that this is the worry about morally falling behind sage kings with whom one shares the same nature. The enormous difference between a learner and sage kings should register as a life-long worry that ceaselessly propels one to improve.

[10] Lo, "Confucius and His Community," 60.
[11] Ibid.

In terms of the *Analects*, 7.3 is note-worthy: "that I fail to cultivate virtue, that I fail to practice what I learn, that I fail to improve upon hearing what is appropriate, and that I fail to reform what is not good – these are my sources of worries. 德之不脩，學之不講，聞義不能徙，不善不能改，是吾憂也." Qing dynasty scholar Jiao Yuanxi 焦袁熹 comments on this passage that the kind of worries mentioned in the passage are different from other kinds that are rooted in personal concerns (人心之私慮). It is the kind that makes sages and the worthy become who they are (聖賢之所以為聖賢者, 全在乎此).[12] Reminiscent of the *Mengzi* passage, it strikes a different point that even sages go through the same path of having deep worries. Note that this already presents a disagreement against the standard view regarding the process of moral cultivation. Although clearly under-developed, its claim that sages follow the same path indicates that worry has indispensable significance.

Modern Confucian Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 presents a similar view that "the gentleman is always calm and worry-free. He is not worried about the insufficiency of wealth, power or status, but worried that his virtues are not refined, and learnings not perfected. His worry persists throughout his life without an end, and is always placed within the mind of calmness. 君子永遠是坦蕩蕩的。他所憂的不是財貨權勢的未足，而是德之未修與學之未講。他的憂患，衆生無已，而永在坦蕩蕩的胸懷中."[13] Speaking in the same tradition that considers worry as having indispensable significance, and despite the ostensible need for elaboration, Mou's claim

[12] Shude 樹德 Cheng 程, *Lun Yu Ji Shi 論語集釋*, ed. Junying 俊英 Cheng 程 and Jianyuan 見元 Jiang 蔣, Xin Bian Zhu Zi Ji Cheng (Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shu ju : Xin hua shu dian Beijing fa xing suo fa xing 新華書店：北京發行所發行, 1990), 440; Edward G. Slingerland, trans., *Confucius Analects: With Selection from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub. Co, 2003), 64–65.

[13] Zongsan 宗三 Mou 牟, *Zhong guo zhe xue de te zhi 中國哲學的特質*, Zai ban, Xin ya yan jiu suo cong shu (Tai bei: Tai wan xue sheng shu ju, 1994), 12.

presents a sharp contrast to the standard view, which holds that a matured learner is free of worry and full of joy. Mou thinks that the matured learner has worries that never end, just like the *Mengzi* passage. More strikingly, he thinks that such kind of worries is compatible with having a composed mind. A matured learner is at once deeply worried, yet composed and undisturbed.

It seems as if we have two contradictory views on moral cultivation regarding the significance of worry, both in terms of the cultivation process and the end state. The standard view argues for a model of moral cultivation where the learner gradually cleanses herself of worries, attains joy in replacement of worries, and culminates in a state of worry-free joyfulness, whereas the alternative view argues that the learner never gets rid of worries, and continues to have worries that are compatible with joy even at the end state. The crux of the issue, therefore, centers on the understanding of worry and its significance in the text of the *Analects*.

In his recent paper on joy, Shun observes that the *Analects* holds an implicit distinction between idealized kinds of worry (or ethical worry for short) and non-idealized kinds of worry (or inappropriate worry for short).[14] Just like the scholars defending the standard view, Shun notes that there are inappropriate worries, including "material conditions of life and appreciations by others, and other considerations such as the superior social position of others."[15] These matters should possess little importance in the mind of serious learners. However, just like thinkers of the minor trend, Shun also notes that there are ethical worries that are important, such as worries about "learning and self-cultivation, and matters related to family and state, such as

[14] Kwong-Loi Shun, "Le in the Analects," in *A Concise Companion to Confucius*, ed. Paul Rakita Goldin, 2017, 133-147. It is worth emphasizing that Shun's paper does not intend to defend the minor view or argue against the standard view. In fact, his paper focuses on joy, rather than worry. However, his keen observation is useful and in my opinion, makes a decisive case for the minor view regarding worry. See discussion below.

[15] Shun, 145. Shun's position on these matters is similar but less strong than, say, Slingerland. While agreeing that these matters should not worry leaners in the sense of having little value, Shun nonetheless thinks that not all these are utterly irrelevant, especially concerns for basic survival needs. .

the health of parents and, for those in appropriate positions, order in the state."[16] Significantly, these ethical worries are not only important, but are "part of the ethical ideal" of the Confucian *Dao.*[17] Put differently, being worried about ethical matters partly constitutes what it means to be a Confucian. A serious Confucian learner must be concerned about these ethical matters.

Shun's distinction is important for two reasons. First, it situates the two views from being contradictory or talking pass each other to both capturing something right about worry in the text. The standard view focuses on the inappropriate kinds of worries, which do need to be minimized and eventually ruled out.[18] The minor trend speaks emphatically about the ethical kinds of worries, which should be a stable in the mind of learners regardless of how far one has developed. Second and more importantly, it shows that the minor view is more accurate than the standard view regarding worry and moral psychology in general. One reason is that the minor view in fact attends to both kinds of worries, while the standard view fails to properly address the ethical kind. Further, this absence leads to a subtle yet significant misunderstanding of Confucian moral psychology. A matured learner is more than someone who forgoes inappropriate worries. They also attain ethical worries as a necessary part of their evaluative outlook. Thus, it is unlikely that they would be joyful and worry-free, and more likely that they would be free of concern only regarding quotidian goods, but have persistent concerns over ethical matters.

I would like to make two comments on this rich yet less known debate. First, although Shun's paper does not focus on worry, I consider the implication of his useful distinction to convincingly refute the standard picture regarding moral psychology. This does not mean the

[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] It is worth pointing out that scholars such as Slingerland and Yu do recognize what Shun identifies as the idealized kinds of worries. See discussion below.

standard picture contains no valuable truths. It is true that sages would forgo worries about quotidian goods such as wealth, status and power. It is also true that sages would experience deep, and in the case of Confucius, overflowing joy. However, it is not true that sages would simply have no worries at all, especially regarding the ethical kind. It is worth noting that scholars arguing for the standard view do recognize that there are certain worries that are appropriate. Both Slingerland and Yu cite 7.3. Slingerland comments that concerns about the internal realm are "warranted" while Yu says that the kind of worries mentioned in 7.3 "prompts one to work hard at cultivation."[19] Nonetheless, they only offer a passing recognition with no comments on the significance of the appropriate kind of worries. The fact that their view argues for a worry-free agent suggests that worry does not hold any lasting significance.[20] Shun provides the much-needed details of the minor view in terms of the *Analects*, and argues that the appropriate kind of worries is a necessary part of Confucian moral psychology, because it constitutes part of the Confucian evaluative outlook. For Shun, and I agree, ethical worries are more than something to be noted in passing, but an indispensable part of the agent's psychology even when she has reached high-level of development. This defends and delineates the alternative view of the psychology of advanced learners. They would plausibly experience powerful joy, be unconcerned about quotidian goods, but also have deep ethical worries. This leads to the second comment.

[19] Slingerland, "The Conception of Ming in Early Confucian Thought," 572; Yu, *The Ethics of Confucius and Aristotle*, 187–88.

[20] Given that Slingerland and Yu offer few comments, it is hard to see what they would say regarding the significance of ethical worries. One possibility consistent with their view might be that such worry as having only temporary significance. Fully developed agent would be certain of one's own moral state and no longer worry about how one is doing. Confucius' claim on 7.3, therefore, functions as a pedagogical exhortation (rather than a genuine claim of his own state) that learners not yet reaching the final stage should always be concerned. But matured agents would no longer worry about overstepping the moral boundary. Neither scholars, nor anyone else in my limited knowledge of the scholarship has developed such an account.

The *Analects*, therefore, arguably contains a more nuanced picture of moral psychology and moral cultivation than has been commonly recognized. My comment above pertains to moral psychology. Regarding moral cultivation and how one develops, it is worth recalling the contrast between the standard view and the alternative view. The standard view has a conception of the end state, which then informs its view on the general features of cultivation. Specifically, given that a matured learner would be joyful and worry-free, beginners likely go through a process where worries get gradually eradicated while joy becomes abundant and more attainable. The alternative view presented by scholars such as Yuan, Mou, and Shun has a different conception of the end state. However, no developed account has been proposed in light of this end state. Particularly regarding ethical worries, does the text offer insights that even the cultivation process involves worries? If so, what are the general features involved in the process of learning to worry rightly and well? Through discussing methods of cultivation found in the *Analects*, I argue that moral cultivation does involve learning to worry well. Furthermore, the process of learning to worry well involves learning to worry broadly beyond one's intimate circle, and deeply about particular individuals standing in important relationship to us. To explicate this thesis, I start with a discussion on the terminology of "worry."

3: A Contour on Learning to Worry Well

3.1 Preliminary Reflections: "Worry," "Care," and Xing 性

In this section I address two preliminary issues. The first issue centers on the terminology of "worry." The corresponding character in the *Analects* is "*you* 憂." I argue that *you* 憂 is not used as a technical term in the text. It does not exclusively denote the mental state of matured agents. *Junzi* 君子 or matured agents as well as common people both have *you* 憂 (6.11, 9.29, 12.4, 15.12). It does not exclusively denote moral concerns and is used to describe worries of both the ethical and non-ethical kinds (7.19, 15.32). Further, it is used for long-term concerns

such as one's learning and character (7.3) as well as short-term concerns (15.12). Thus, it is not a technical term, and can be appropriately rendered as "worry," which is equally general and unspecific in English.

Nonetheless, being un-technical does not mean that *you* 憂 denotes a range of unconnected emotional states.[21] An important point about *you* 憂 or worry is that it is rooted in care. By care, I mean the basic psychological phenomenon that certain things in the world matter to me.[22] Whether consciously or unconsciously felt, they capture my attention, stand out to my perception and judgment as something special, and register as something that is *not* valueless, meaningless and neutral. This psychological "pull" seems to naturally create worry and distress. Put differently, the fact that I care about something typically entails that I am anxious and worried about it, whether I am aware of it or not. This does not mean that caring about certain things entails a high level of anxiety and distress. Caring about certain things can lead to varying levels of distress and anxiety, because one can care about things with varying levels of seriousness.[23] This also does not imply that the relationship between care and worry is a matter of psychological mutual entailment with certainty, or that care would only lead to worry and not

[21] *Erya* 爾雅 catalogues *you* 憂 under either *you* 憂 or worry, and *si* 思 or to think and contemplate. The two usages are not unrelated usage of the same character. Rather, later texts (such as *Liji* 禮記, *Hanshi Waizhuan* 韓詩外傳, *Lushi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋) start to put these two uses together as a unit of *yousi* 憂思, indicating a tight connection between these two meanings of *you* 憂. My discussion below offers one explanation to the connection between the two usages of *you* 憂, namely, worrying and thinking. I thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out to me the two usages of *you* 憂 in *Erya* 爾雅.

[22] Thus, it should be clear that I am not using any theoretically thick notion of care such as the one used by care ethics. For an overview that compares care ethics and Confucian ethics, see Ann A. Pang-White, "Caring in Confucian Philosophy: Caring in Confucian Philosophy," *Philosophy Compass* 6, no. 6 (June 2011): 374–84, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-9991.2011.00405.x.

[23] Worry also does not directly and accurately reveal the object of care. For instance, I may constantly and anxiously ask about my brother's work schedule. This is not because his work schedule makes a difference to me, but because it makes a difference to his safety, which is my true object of concern.

other emotions. Nonetheless, it seems true that care and worry are tightly connected. Therefore, one's worries provide clues regarding what one cares about, and caring about certain things typically entails worry, whether or not worry is consciously recognized or the prominent emotion.

If this analysis is on the right track, passages having *no* character of "*you* 憂" can perfectly demonstrate the emotion of what the character is about, namely, worry. For instance, 4.21 contends that one must know the age of one's parents, for it is at the same time a source of delight (*xi* 喜) and fear (*ju* 懼). While "*you* 憂" the character is absent in this line, it is clear that worrying about parents is not. This is because the key message of this passage is that one should care about parents' age deeply, such that it becomes a source of delight knowing how long parents have lived, and a source of trepidation concerning how old they are becoming. The text uses "*ju* 懼" (fear or trepidation) instead of "*you* 憂" (worry) presumably because the object, namely, parents' age, palpably relates to the agent as one of the greatest losses one could experience, making "*ju* 懼" the more precise and appropriate emotion one should have. The *Analects* contains numerous passages similar to 4.21 where the emotion of worry is present while the character "*you* 憂" is not. Thus, I include passages that do not contain "*you* 憂" to enrich the discussion below, even though it puts me at the risk of imprecision and taking too much interpretative liberty.

My point about care and worry leads to the second preliminary issue regarding *xing* 性 or roughly, human nature. One reason why *xing* is important is because it explains the starting point of cultivation. If cultivation is a process of changing what we start with and evolving into a certain desirable state, it is important to know what that starting point is like so that we can better

understand what cultivation is about. *Xing* provides such an answer and unfortunately, the *Analects* is notoriously vague about it.[24] Nonetheless, this absence of explicit comment on *xing* need not make us adopt theoretically thick notions of *xing* in the *Mengzi* or the *Xunzi.* I argue that the *Analects*' keen sensitivity to what human beings typically care about is sufficient to answer these questions about the starting point and the project of cultivation.[25]

The *Analects* readily acknowledges that people have a wide range of things that they care about, including wealth and status (4.5, 7.12, 7.16), fame (9.23, 15.19, 15.20), human relations, and so on.[26] In particular, human relationship is not just one kind of object among others that people commonly care about. For Confucians, human relations matter deeply to who one is and possess special status and significance to the structure and foci of one's life. That human relations matter deeply to one's identity is the basic idea of "relational self," a concept that has been generally agreed to be a background assumption of the *Analects.* Much important research has been published regarding this concept by scholars no less than David Hall, Roger Ames,

[24] 17.2 provides the only explicit comment on *xing*, and it says that "the *xing* of humans is similar. Customs and habits make them apart. 性相近也, 習相遠也." However, the text contains many implicit comments that can fit either a Mengzian or Xunzian interpretation. For debates that discuss both interpretations, see Edward G. Slingerland, *Effortless Action: Wu-Wei as Conceptual Metaphor and Spiritual Ideal in Early China* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); David B. Wong, "Cultivating the Self in Concert with Others," in *Dao Companion to the Analects*, ed. Amy Olberding (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2014), 171–97, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7113-0_10.

[25] By "sufficient," I do not mean that "what humans typically care about" is sufficient to solve all the questions that *xing* addresses. Rather, I mean that it is sufficient to provide an answer to what the starting point is for moral cultivation.

[26] There are too many passages about human relationships to list. Here is an inexhaustive catalogue: for filial relationships, see 1.2, 1.6, 1.11, 2.5-8, 4.18; for friends, see 1.4, 1.7-8, 2.21, 4.26, 9.25; for superiors, see 3.18-9, 4.26, 11.24, 14.22.

Rosemont Jr., and David Wong.[27] For the purpose of this paper, I focus on the experiential aspect of "relational self" and leave aside its metaphysical implications.[28]

First and foremost, the basic, rudimentary experience of having a relationship with someone is that I react differently to them than to complete strangers. This means that the people who form a relationship with me can have a bigger influence on my decision, a stronger claim to my attention and time, and a more powerful impact on my emotional state than those who are complete strangers.[29] I highlight two points regarding this basic experience. First, this pattern of interaction where we treat people differently based on relationships is natural. This means that treating people differently because of their relationship to me is acquired without learning. It serves as the untutored initial position from which most people start. Second and relatedly, relationships make a difference emotionally. Related others, regardless of the exact nature of the relationship, tend to be more capable of eliciting emotional responses from me than complete strangers. This is especially true for people with whom I have intimate and strong relationships. They are properly called "special" to me. Part of the "special-ness" is that more often than not, they possess the power to bring me relish or break my heart. What they say, do, and how they are comprise a potent source of happiness and disturbance. Furthermore, their influence often occurs

[27] David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking through Confucius*, SUNY Series in Systematic Philosophy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987); David B. Wong, "Relational and Autonomous Selves," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 31, no. 4 (December 2004): 419–32, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6253.2004.00163.x; Henry Rosemont, Jr., "Rights-Bearing Individuals and Role-Bearing Persons," in *Rules, Rituals, and Responsibility: Essays Dedicated to Herbert Fingarette*, ed. Mary I. Bockover (Open Court, 1991), 71–102.

[28] For an overview on related issues, see John Ramsey, "Confucian Role Ethics: A Critical Survey: Confucian Role Ethics: A Critical Survey," *Philosophy Compass* 11, no. 5 (May 2016): 235–45, https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12324.

[29] In certain relationships, the opposite can happen, that because of the relationship, I care less about that person and treat that person "colder" than a complete stranger. Social life has made known to us numerous possibilities where people who have relationships with each other do not give each other preferential regard. While presenting importantly different examples to what is discussed here, these cases do not refute but reinforce the claim that having a relationship with another person changes how one would interact with that person compared to strangers.

in ways that are unique to our relationships. All of this is as it should be.[30] Both aspects – namely, the pattern of differential interaction and the emotional influence from intimate others – are characteristic of what it means to have a relationship with someone. In other words, both are basic components of the experiential quality of relational self. The "self" that is cultivated and improved demonstrates corresponding changes in both aspects.

3.2 Development in the Breadth of Worrying through Extension

Regarding the pattern of differential interaction, the *Analects* indicates a path of cultivation that takes heed of it, but also modifies it. This is the well-acknowledged cultivation method of "extension." Much of the scholarship on "extension" focuses on the *Mengzi*, largely because the *Mengzi* offers a lot more resources for discussing this method than the *Analects*.[31] Nonetheless, the basic idea of this method is already present in the *Analects*, which is that the agent should gradually enlarge her circle of care to include minimally those who are not family members and friends, such as fellow villagers (1.6, 13.20), and maximally everybody in the world (6.30, 14.42). While this is the general direction for cultivation, an important qualification must be added. Enlarging one's care beyond one's intimate circle does not imply that one cares about everyone with the same level of emotional intensity and responsiveness as, for instance, the parent-child relationship. In fact, no one should match the significance of parents, and one's

[30] "Should" here carries a similar force to the claim that "summer should be hotter than winter." In other words, there seems to be a psychological principle that governs how we most often interact with those who are close to us, such that exceptions would properly be considered anomalies.

[31] For instance, see Kwong-Loi Shun, "Moral Reasons in Confucian Ethics," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 16, no. 3–4 (1989): 317–43, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6253.1989.tb00441.x; Bryan W. Van Norden, "Kwong-Loi Shun on Moral Reasons in Mencius," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 18, no. 4 (1991): 353–70, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6253.1991.tb00733.x; David B. Wong, "Reasons and Analogical Reasoning in Mengzi," in *Essays on the Moral Philosophy of Mengzi*, ed. Liu Xiusheng and P. J. Ivanhoe (Hackett Publishing Company, 2002), 187–220, https://scholars.duke.edu/display/pub1023516; Emily McRae, "The Cultivation of Moral Feelings and Mengzi's Method of Extension," *Philosophy East and West* 61, no. 4 (2011): 587–608, https://doi.org/10.1353/pew.2011.0050, etc.

care for different groups of people should be substantively different.[32] For example, one's care for village elderly might manifest most strongly in one's genuine deference to their status and role (10.10) and in one's concern for making their old age peaceful and restful (5.26). In contrast, one's care for the general public might be less personal. It typically results in advising rulers to make people prosperous and instill morality (13.9), rather than ruling with an iron-fist and punishment (2.3). Overall, extension implies a sense of reorganization of psychology that everyone, regardless of who they are to me, should become a genuine person of concern. Part of what "genuine" means is that everyone I care about should be capable of emotionally moving me. However, this reorganization does not imply equal, impartial treatment of all. Rather, our natural pattern of differential interaction should be preserved.

While much of what I said on extension so far is familiar to Confucian scholars, the implication of extension on worry is less commonly explored. As I begin to care for people outside of my intimate circle, I can no longer remain emotionally unmoved or indifferent to them the way I used to be because what they do, how they live and what happens to them all hold weight in my heart. This implies that as I cultivate myself to care for more people, I also cultivate myself to worry and be moved more broadly. Extension, therefore, is markedly a process of becoming worried about more things and more people beyond one's intimate circle. Confucius' disciple Zengzi epitomizes this aspect of extension. In addition to his reputation as a filial son, Zengzi demonstrates dutiful care and concern for friends and superiors. He introspects

[32] One exception that has plagued later Confucians is rulers. Rulers' commands, and the duty to fulfill their commands can rival one's duty to parents. Numerous stories have depicted this conflict of rival moral duties and virtues between *zhong* 忠 (roughly, loyalty) and *xiao* 孝 (filial reverence). See Mark Csikszentmihalyi, *Material Virtue: Ethics and the Body in Early China*, Sinica Leidensia, v. 66 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2004), 3–5; Michael David Kaulana Ing, *The Vulnerability of Integrity in Early Confucian Thought* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), 146-149. Nonetheless, it is arguably true that despite their competing claims of moral duties, *zhong* 忠 and *xiao* 孝 are significantly different in emotional quality. *Xiao* 孝 is deeply personal and intimate in a way that *zhong* 忠 is not and perhaps should not be.

regularly everyday regarding the following questions: Whether he has been loyal and dutiful when working for others, whether he has been trustworthy for his friends, and whether he has practiced what he has learned that day (1.4). Such scrutiny of whether one has done one's utmost towards friends and superiors invokes consistent worry. Further, a dedicated Confucian does not stop short of one's care and concern to friends and superiors only. The goal of Confucian cultivation ultimately aims at caring and benefiting the whole world (6.30, 14.42). Zengzi says that "scholar-official must be strong and steadfast, for his burden is heavy and his *dao* is far. *Ren* is his duty. Is it not heavy? Upon death will his quest end. Is it not far? 士不可以不弘毅, 任重而道遠.仁以為己任, 不亦重乎? 死而後已, 不亦遠乎?" Zengzi's determination is not just to become a reliable friend and a loyal official, but to bring forth the Confucian *dao* of *ren* to his world. He makes clear the far end of extension and vividly expresses the accompanying persistent worry one should have.[33]

3.3 Development in the Depth of Worrying through Intensification

The discussion on extension above indicates a need to preserve differential moral attitudes and actions when interacting with different people. This difference is importantly based on relationship. Certain others are simply special to me, which, as discussed above, is partly reflected in their unique capacity to emotionally affect me. In the *Analects*, parents are the archetype among these people, who constitute the initial human connection in which one lives. Importantly, the recognition that there are special people who matter to me much more than

[33] This idea that a matured learner should care and worry broadly is taken up by later Confucians and expressed in different forms. Sometimes, it is uttered as advice to rulers (e.g., Mengzi, 1B4). Sometimes, it is expressed as an ideal to which all should aspire, and Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 utters one such memorable line. He says that one should "have worries and concerns before the world has them 先天下之憂而憂." I thank Shun for pointing out this historical development to me. For more discussions on how such kind of worry is understood by later Confucians, see Kwong-loi Shun, "Zhu Xi and the Idea of One Body," in *Dao Companion to ZHU Xi's Philosophy*, ed. Kai-chiu Ng and Yong Huang, vol. 13, Dao Companions to Chinese Philosophy (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020), 400–402, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-29175-4_19.

others does not provide any clear moral guidance, but raises clear moral questions. One such question is how to address, or more appropriately, value and cherish those relationships and these people. Relatedly, if I run into a person who I want to hold dear, how do I develop our relationship in appropriate ways? These questions are not addressed by the method of extension. After all, extension is concerned with developing a proper moral attitude and response towards strangers who will likely remain strangers. Learning how to properly care for those who are close and important to us (or to acquire such a relationship) requires a different method of cultivation.

The *Analects* suggests another method of cultivation which, to my limited knowledge, has no designated name in the scholarship. Let me term it "*intensification*," which denotes that a proper way to cherish intimate and important relationships is to try to involve oneself in their lives and well-being and at the same time, open oneself to be shaped by them in some of the most important aspects of who one is.[34] A part of this method (and the training process) is to become emotionally involved in their well-being, and be moved not only by the cheerful happenings, but also the unfortunate events, the sufferings and worries they have.[35] Given that parents form the archetype of intimate relationships in the *Analects*, I discuss *xiao* 孝/filial reverence below to illustrate intensification.

[34] While this fits well for relationships that are already intimate, it also fits for developing new intimate relationships with important qualifications. For instance, while involvement is necessary for developing intimate relationships, how to get involved is an important and difficult issue to be considered. That requires another paper for another time.

[35] Careful reader might notice that this description also fits extension. Even though it is not the typical way of talking about extension, by my analysis, extension also encourages such involvement where the agent learns to become emotionally sensitive to strangers' well-being. It would seem, therefore, that the extension and intensification are highly similar. It is true that both methods encourage the learner to become emotionally involved in the life of another. However, discussion below will show that intensification differs in the depth of involvement, and results in the development of highly intimate relationships.

The various passages about *xiao* show that it has a complex content. Arguably, some aspects of *xiao* are basic and should be observed by even beginners, while others belong to higher requirements that are only achievable by advanced learners, even though they should remain aspirations for all. Most basically, *xiao* requires proper respect for parents in addition to material provision (2.7). However, being respectful and having proper demeanor do not exhaust *xiao.* An exemplar of *xiao* can perform acts with proper demeanors. So can someone who is still working on *xiao*. Part of the difference is found in the state of mind. Passage 2.6 and 4.18 illuminate the difference.

In 2.6, Confucius says that a child should recognize and reciprocate parents' concerns, and not let parents worry about oneself except for uncontrollable events such as illness.[36] Zhu Xi 朱熹's commentary suggests that an important message of this passage is reciprocity and empathy.[37] Taking care of oneself is obviously a part of the advice. More importantly, one should understand parents' heart and mind and reciprocate. Parents' love and care for the child lead them to be stressed about numerous things in their child's life, and the child should take to heart parents' love and worries. When an agent attends to parents' worries, she may recognize that often, her parents' worries center around her. While she may not eliminate all of her parents' worries, she can certainly work on the parts about her. Thus, she needs to be attuned to their concerns and aspirations for her. In this way, parents' wishes and concerns are no longer their own, but understood and shared by the child.

[36] The grammar of this passage opens it to another interpretation that the only worry children have about parents is their illness. See Cheng 程, *Lun Yu Ji Shi 論語集釋*, 84–85; Yong Huang, *Confucius: A Guide for the Perplexed*, Guides for the Perplexed (New York: Continuum, 2012), 126; Slingerland, *Effortless Action*, 10.
[37] See Cheng 程, *Lun Yu Ji Shi 論語集釋*, 84.

Traditional commentaries provide numerous ideas of parents' concerns.[38] One key theme shared by commentators across periods of time is that parents are worried about kids not taking care of themselves and committing wrongs in society or against themselves. Thus, in order to subdue parents' worries, children should actively guard against committing wrongs in speech, conduct, habit or any other areas that may cause concerns. Not committing wrongs should be sufficiently motivating for most agents even if there is no force coming from parents. This passage, therefore, emphasizes that learners should be worried about parents' concerns and regard subduing parents' concerns as an additional source of motivation for rectifying oneself.

4.18 is another rich passage for *xiao*. "When it comes to serving parents, you should gently remonstrate them. When you see that your will is not followed by your parents, you ought to remain reverent [toward your parents] but not go against [your will]. Labor over it [i.e., remonstration] but do not resent [your parents] **事父母幾**諫. **見志不**從, **又敬不**違, **勞而不**怨."[39] Parents' mistakes are no longer their own, but bear on the child's conscience such that she actively seeks to correct them. While the text does not explicitly state the kind of mistakes parents make, the fact that Confucius recommends persistent remonstration indicates the seriousness and stubbornness of those mistakes. It is a genuine possibility, therefore, that Confucius is indicating deep-seated problems such as those rooted in age-old habits and character. It is from this genuine desire for parents to be free from serious problems and the failed attempts to change them that Confucius comments on the deep bitterness of being *xiao*, that the child should "labor over it [remonstration], but do not resent [your parents]" (**勞而不**怨).

[38] Ibid. Huang offers a helpful discussion on traditional commentaries and ancient texts. See Huang, *Confucius*, 126–31.
[39] I follow Huang's translation. See Huang, 133–36.

What is remarkable about this passage is its acknowledgement of the strong, negative emotion of resentment towards one's parents that a *xiao*-aspiring child could have. However, this resentment does not come from the child brooding over parents' "unfair" treatments towards him or her, but out of the child's deep care, concern, and responsibility for parents. In other words, the resentment results from the fact that the child is worried sick, frustrated, and yet not willing to give up on helping parents to improve. Nonetheless, even though such resentment may be morally justified to the extent that its source is morally appropriate, one should still manage it and redirect one's care and worry to further remonstration.[40] In other words, the implied in the short line of "do not resent" is a suggestion that "please do not give up either." Rather, one should keep on being worried, concerned, and care for parents and "labor over it [remonstration]." Perhaps, in the tug of war between parents' stubbornness and the child's tireless effort, there can come an improvement that enables parents to live better than before. Therefore, this passage recommends that children should take the well-being of their parents as a serious personal matter that deserves commitment and perseverance.

In whatever way *xiao* develops or manifests, 2.6 and 4.18 demonstrate that *xiao* is related to the significance of parents in actively and positively structuring one's character and states of mind. Because a significant part of parents' well-being is centered on oneself, one's care for parents' well-being motivates one to work on oneself. How one speaks, behaves, habitually does, and arguably, one's whole comportment are shaped by parents' concerns for oneself and one's concerns for them. The motivational structure of the agent is changed in that parents' concerns *become* a motivating factor for self-cultivation. In addition, parents' well-being overall becomes the agent's own serious project. Parents' well-being, including material, emotional, and character

[40] See the *Mengzi*, 5a1, for a discussion on the emotion of *yuan* 怨 in *xiao*. See also Ing, *Vulnerability*, pp113-121.

well-being, gradually changes from their matter to a constant concern in one's mind. Through development of *xiao,* their well-being ceases to be an after-thought trailing behind other concerns one has, but is actively considered and valued at the forefront of one's attention. Therefore, development in *xiao* structures some of the most important aspects of a person, including motivational structures and dedicated personal projects.

Certain features of developing *xiao* are relevant for intensification in general. First of all, the strengthened relationship likely changes the agent's motivation for actions (and even self-improvement). Parent-child relationship should not be the only relationship that can possess such power. Words from a deeply caring and intimate teacher should also motivate one to improve oneself, even if the path of improvement seems endless and hard (9.11). Second, an agent might take up serious commitment and life-project due to intensification. While *xiao* provides a clear example, Zengzi's comment on the duty of shouldering *ren* presents another case in point. Zengzi wholeheartedly devotes himself to the project his teacher pursues. While a part of the reason for Zengzi's devotion surely has to do with his reflective endorsement of the Confucian *dao*, it seems plausible that Zengzi's relationship with Confucius provides a reason for dedication as well. Last but not least, one's emotional involvement in intensified relationship gradually restructures one's emotional outlook. The subtlety and intensity of one's emotional life is proliferated such that the learner becomes easily and deeply moved by issues that others do not typically notice or care about. For instance, 5.10 records Confucius getting extremely angry at Zaiyu 宰予 for sleeping in daytime. Confucius says that he no longer believes people's words until he observes their actions. Such a grand scale disappointment at people in general is triggered by an event that is arguably trivial (especially from the perspective of a non-related

third party). Justified or not, it shows the deep concern and care Confucius has for Zaiyu. To summarize, through intensification, the agent learns to care deeply, and thereby worries deeply.

4: The Elephant in the Room, Conclusion, and Implications

In summary, both extension and intensification develop our capacity to care and correspondingly, our capacity to worry. Through practicing extension, the agent learns to care broadly and becomes concerned about people who do not have intimate relationship with oneself. Through practicing intensification, one learns to care deeply about particular individuals, such as parents, and becomes profoundly shaped by their influences and one's worries about them. Learning to care broadly and deeply, given the tight connection between care and worry, involves in practice learning to worry well. Learning to worry well, therefore, is an indispensable and significant part of Confucian moral cultivation.[41]

Numerous implications and questions follow from this conclusion. Before I comment on the implications, however, I want to address what may seem like a strong and clear counterargument to my view. Arguing that learning to worry well is indispensable for cultivation is counterintuitive because worry is not only "negative" for bring about unpleasant feelings, but also negative for being a harmful emotion that more often than not, leads to nothing but debilitation. Worry rarely does not contribute to solving the problems at hand. Instead, it easily diverts one's attention away from the actual matter, brings in concerns that are only relevant indirectly or remotely, and let one's mind dwells in difficulties and unnecessarily raises up one's level of anxiety. This is to say that worry is most often psychologically debilitating and not helpful. Broadening and intensifying one's worries, therefore, seem like a sure recipe for disaster

[41] Bongrae Seok has suggested that another component of learning to worry carefully, in addition to worry broadly and deeply. This means that the cultivation of worrying has a guided direction that focuses on the ethically relevant things (rather than randomly). I thank him for this suggestion.

that should be avoided by most, if not all program of cultivation. The only value that worry should have for cultivation is instrumental and temporary. Just like a block of rock in one's way of climbing, the only function of which is to be stepped over and help the climber go higher, worry is a challenge in one's journey of cultivation, the overcoming and eradication of which strengths the agent's mind and character. Having worry, in other words, is a sign that one is not yet fully developed and indicates certain areas of improvement. Fully developed agents should consequently have no worries at all.[42]

In response to this counterargument, I offer the two following sets of comments. First set further elaborates on what has already been argued and clarifies some misunderstandings. It is important to note, above all, that worry is more than simply negative. Our pre-theoretical experiences of life provide examples where having worries is by far the better response than not being concerned at all. Being worried, concerned, and even fearful regarding certain things reveal that the agent takes the matter seriously (rather than lightly). Teachers may have experiences of getting annoyed by a completely carefree student regarding his study because that student should take his own study seriously and be concerned. This pre-theoretical sense that worry (and a host of related emotions) can be useful is exampled in 7.11, where Kongzi says that compared to someone who dares to fight a tiger barehanded, cross deep river without a boat, and has no regret at death, he rather has a general who is afraid at the junction of events and (consequently) take due diligence in planning and execution. Kongzi's comment is targeted at Zilu, his famously rash and bold student, but also speaks generally. A general who properly appreciates the significance, danger, and potential causality of battle should be afraid, and

[42] I thank an anonymous reviewer for raising the concern about the negative psychological influence of worry, upon which I develop this short counterargument.

consequently be motivated by one's fear and concern to carefully prepare for the battle. Such a person is a better battle-companion than someone who knows no fear or regret, or so says Kongzi. Although "worry" is not directly mentioned here, it is hard to imagine the emotion of worry being left out of the overall psychology that fears and prepares for battle. Thus, worry as an emotion can be appropriate, helpful and motivating, and is not purely negative.

Furthermore, once we see that worry can be both motivating and debilitating, my thesis comes out naturally, that regarding worry, we should learn to worry well, rather than trying to eradicate it. Only something purely negative warrants complete eradication. If worry is a complex state that can either contribute or destruct, calling for eradication is bizarre and requires more proof than the sensible candidate that we should learn to worry well.

Last but not least, by broadening and intensifying one's worries, I do not mean that we should cultivate ourselves to become increasingly anxious about more things and people in our lives. While that might be a literal read, it is a false read. What is implied by broadening one's worry is that even the well-being of strangers should affectively touch us and become a part of our circle of care. What is implied by intensifying one's worry is that we let our care and concern of another person (or goal) to figure deeply into our lives such that our motivations, life purpose and emotional experiences undergo corresponding changes. Focusing on the aspect of emotion, the consequence of broadening and intensifying one's worry, if I may conjecture, is more likely an overall enrichment of emotional life, rather than simply an increase of anxiety level.

The second set of comments addresses what I have *not* argued but remains important and relevant to the project of this paper. The first thing I want to highlight is that this paper has not yet shown *how* to worry well. While I have discussed the general direction of what worrying well may look like, the practical questions, such as how to not be overwhelmed by the visceral

grip of worries and use worries to positively guide one's cultivation, remain unexplored. Let it be clear that these are important questions that deserve serious attention and effort, for the answers to them give the bare bones of Confucian cultivation the much-needed flesh and practical relevance.

Then, there are a few theoretical implications worthy of mentioning. The most obvious one is a further refutation against the standard interpretation. Put bluntly, the result of cultivation would unlikely be a person completely free of worries. In addition to the refutation discussed above regarding the absence of ethical worries, my view demonstrates that learning to worry is embedded in Confucian moral cultivation. Thus, it is highly unlikely that a person who is cultivated to worry broadly and deeply would in the final development become a person with no worries at all. This is demonstrated by the persona of Confucius, who demonstrates a variety of worries depending on the subjects. Given that Confucius was rarely in the position to offer concrete political advice, his advice to rulers regarding the general public was often a step away from politics (8.14, 14.26), and deep into the moral and social realm. He was concerned that the general public should have a government worthy of trust, respect and loyalty (2.20, 12.7), and that the rulers should govern with the guidance of virtues and orders of rites (rather than through fear of punishment) (2.3). Perhaps most importantly, the rulers should be upright and exemplary themselves (2.19, 12.11). Readers of the *Analects* can get a clear sense that Confucius cared about the general public, but was concerned about them in a way that is broad and general. When it comes to his students, however, readers see a Confucius who cares deeply about them in a personal manner. He develops a deep relationship with his students, which is shown in his tailored instructions based upon his deep familiarity with students' unique temperament (11.22). Such a deep relationship implies intimate and serious concerns over students' well-being and

leads to strong emotional reactions to their achievements, failures, and misfortunes. Thus, he would get worked up by Zaiyu who sleeps in daytime (5.10), lament intensely for Bo Niu's disease (6.10), and sever the teacher-student relationship with fierce words when Ranyou gathers wealth for the usurper Ji family (11.17). We see in the very exemplar of the *Analects* a person who cares and worries broadly regarding the general republic, and deeply for close students.

Relatedly, another important implication is that the notion of "control" central to the standard interpretation is arguably not helpful for understanding Confucian moral psychology. This is because first, proper objects of moral concerns, such as the well-being of fellow citizens or parents, do not fall neatly into one's control or hopelessly outside of one's control. Rather, how much one can make a difference seems a matter of uncertainty, which the notion of "control" does not capture. Second, even for things that fall out of one's control, such as the order of the state, it is not clearly that the learner should not care about them. Lastly, even when one has tried one's utmost, it is not clear that one can therefore rejoice or should, in Slingerland's memorable words, have "an attitude of joyful acceptance of all that life may bring."[43] 4.18 makes it clear that trying one's utmost should not exculpate one from caring and concerning oneself with parents' well-being. While one might self-affirm that continuing arduous remonstration is doing the right thing, there is no joyful acceptance of what may come. In fact, there should be worries until parents change and improve. Thus, the usefulness of the notion of "control" is questionable.

It is important, however, to also see what this paper did not do. The standard interpretation speaks truly that Confucius' claims and demonstrations of tranquility (4.2, 7.37,

[43] Slingerland, "The Conception of Ming in Early Confucian Thought," 568.

9.29, 12.4, 14.28) and intense joy (7.14, 7.19) are philosophically interesting and significant. While the standard account fails to give due significance to ethical worries, and therefore, offers an account of moral psychology and moral cultivation that is not accurate, its subjects of tranquility and joy are undeniably important. This paper has not provided an alternative view regarding the nature of tranquility and joy, or more pertinent to the project of this paper, an account of the relationship between these emotions. Both topics are significant topics that await dedicated treatises. Nonetheless, if this paper is on the right track, the *Analects* contains a complex picture of matured learners who are, as Mou suggested, profoundly worried *and* joyful. How to square this circle is open to multiple interpretations.[44] What this paper shows, then, is that whatever interpretation one takes, worry should be a significant part of the picture.

[44] For interested readers, Shun's paper has provided one plausible account on how deep worries can be compatible with deep joy.

Bibliography

Cheng 程, Shude 樹德. *Lun Yu Ji Shi 論語集釋*. Edited by Junying 俊英 Cheng 程 and Jianyuan 見元 Jiang 蔣. Xin Bian Zhu Zi Ji Cheng. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shu ju : Xin hua shu dian Beijing fa xing suo fa xing 新華書店：北京發行所發行, 1990.

Csikszentmihalyi, Mark. *Material Virtue: Ethics and the Body in Early China*. Sinica Leidensia, v. 66. Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2004.

Hall, David L., and Roger T. Ames. *Thinking through Confucius*. SUNY Series in Systematic Philosophy. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987.

Huang, Yong. *Confucius: A Guide for the Perplexed*. Guides for the Perplexed. New York: Continuum, 2012.

Ing, Michael David Kaulana. *The Vulnerability of Integrity in Early Confucian Thought*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Lo, Yuet Keung. "Confucius and His Community." In *Dao Companion to the Analects*, edited by Amy Olberding, 55–79. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2014. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7113-0_4.

McRae, Emily. "The Cultivation of Moral Feelings and Mengzi's Method of Extension." *Philosophy East and West* 61, no. 4 (2011): 587–608. https://doi.org/10.1353/pew.2011.0050.

Mou 牟, Zongsan 宗三. *Zhong guo zhe xue de te zhi 中國哲學的特質*. Zai ban. Xin ya yan jiu suo cong shu. Tai bei: Tai wan xue sheng shu ju, 1994.

Pang-White, Ann A. "Caring in Confucian Philosophy: Caring in Confucian Philosophy." *Philosophy Compass* 6, no. 6 (June 2011): 374–84. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-9991.2011.00405.x.

Ramsey, John. "Confucian Role Ethics: A Critical Survey: Confucian Role Ethics: A Critical Survey." *Philosophy Compass* 11, no. 5 (May 2016): 235–45. https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12324.

Rosemont, Jr., Henry. "Rights-Bearing Individuals and Role-Bearing Persons." In *Rules, Rituals, and Responsibility: Essays Dedicated to Herbert Fingarette*, edited by Mary I. Bockover, 71–102. Open Court, 1991.

Shun, Kwong-Loi. "Le in the Analects." In *A Concise Companion to Confucius*, edited by Paul Rakita Goldin, 2017.

———. "Moral Reasons in Confucian Ethics." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 16, no. 3–4 (1989): 317–43. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6253.1989.tb00441.x.

Shun, Kwong-loi. "Zhu Xi and the Idea of One Body." In *Dao Companion to ZHU Xi's Philosophy*, edited by Kai-chiu Ng and Yong Huang, 13:389–444. Dao Companions to Chinese Philosophy. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-29175-4_19.

Slingerland, Edward G., trans. *Confucius Analects: With Selection from Traditional Commentaries*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub. Co, 2003.

Slingerland, Edward G. *Effortless Action: Wu-Wei as Conceptual Metaphor and Spiritual Ideal in Early China*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Slingerland, Ted. “The Conception of Ming in Early Confucian Thought.” *Philosophy East and West* 46, no. 4 (1996): 567–81. https://doi.org/10.2307/1399496.

Van Norden, Bryan W. “Kwong-Loi Shun on Moral Reasons in Mencius.” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 18, no. 4 (1991): 353–70. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6253.1991.tb00733.x.

Wong, David B. “Cultivating the Self in Concert with Others.” In *Dao Companion to the Analects*, edited by Amy Olberding, 171–97. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2014. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7113-0_10.

———. “Reasons and Analogical Reasoning in Mengzi.” In *Essays on the Moral Philosophy of Mengzi*, edited by Liu Xiusheng and P. J. Ivanhoe, 187–220. Hackett Publishing Company, 2002. https://scholars.duke.edu/display/pub1023516.

———. “Relational and Autonomous Selves.” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 31, no. 4 (December 2004): 419–32. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6253.2004.00163.x.

Yao, Xingzhong. “Joy, Wisdom and Virtue—The Confucian Paradigm of Good Life.” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 45, no. 3–4 (2018): 222–32. https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-6253.12358.

Yu, Jiyuan. *The Ethics of Confucius and Aristotle: Mirrors of Virtue*. Routledge Studies in Ethics and Moral Theory 7. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Paper 2: Confucian Humility in the *Analects*

1. Abstract and Introduction

The growing literature on humility in general has sparked interests regarding humility in Confucianism.[1] Scholars such as Jin Li, Sara Rushing, Alexus McLeod and Shun have offered related but distinct accounts of Confucian humility. Building upon their accounts and adding the new element of *li* 禮, I argue that in the *Analects*,[2] there are two strands of Confucian humility. Focusing on the agent herself, the first strand can be characterized as vigilance rooted in loving learning. Focusing on others and responsibilities in general, the second strand can be characterized as devotion to responsibility. When they are effectively communicated through *li*, both strands are recognized as Confucian humility proper. To argue for my thesis, I first canvas four recent papers on Confucian humility in section two. Then, in section three, I elaborate on the two strands of Confucian humility and the significance of *li* respectively. I conclude by

[1] Numerous collections of essays have been produced in the past few years on the topic of humility. See for instance, Mark Alfano, Michael P. Lynch, and Alessandra Tanesini, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Humility*, Routledge Handbooks in Philosophy (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2020); Jennifer Cole Wright, ed., *Humility*, The Virtues: Multidisciplinary Perspectives (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019). For an overview on humility in the broadly construed Western tradition, see Nancy E. Snow, "Theories of Humility: An Overview," The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Humility (Routledge, June 15, 2020), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351107532-3.

[2] While most translations in this paper are my own, I have consulted the following translations and commentaries: Edward G. Slingerland, trans., *Confucius Analects: With Selection from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub. Co, 2003); Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont, trans., *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation*, 1st trade pbk. ed, Classics of Ancient China (New York: Ballantine Books, 1999); Confucius, E. Bruce Brooks, and A. Taeko Brooks, *The Original Analects: Sayings of Confucius and His Successors*, Translations from the Asian Classics (New York [Great Britain]: Columbia University Press, 1998); Qinshan 钦善 Sun 孙, *Lun Yu Ben Jie 论语本解*, Xiu ding ban (Beijing Shi: Sheng huo - du shu - xin zhi san lian shu dian, 2013); Shude 樹德 Cheng 程, *Lun Yu Ji Shi 論語集釋*, ed. Junying 俊英 Cheng 程 and Jianyuan 見元 Jiang 蔣, Xin Bian Zhu Zi Ji Cheng (Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shu ju : Xin hua shu dian Beijing fa xing suo fa xing 新華書店：北京發行所發行, 1990); Ling 零 Li 李, *Sang Jia Gou: Wo Du "Lun Yu" 丧家犬 -- 我读《论语》*, Xiu ding ban, di 1 ban (Taiyuan: Shanxi ren min chu ban she, 2007). Regarding figures discussed in this paper such as Kongzi and his students, I do not imply strong historical accuracy, but the personas presented in the text that has some historical affinity.

reflecting on how my account incorporates and differs from the four papers discussed in section two.

2. Four Recent Papers on Confucian Humility

Jin Li's paper published in 2016 considers Confucian humility from the perspective of psychology and culture.[3] While she does not provide a clear definition of Confucian humility, she offers numerous insights and observations about unique characteristics of it. Her discussion starts with an observation that humility is highly valued because of its connection to learning, which, for Confucianism, focuses on moral self-cultivation. Two points about Confucian self-cultivation contribute to Li's account of Confucian humility. First, Confucians have a keen awareness of social interdependence and in particular, indebtedness that each person owes to those who enable their flourishing (such as, but not exclusively, parents), the latter of which generates a moral duty for reciprocity and acknowledgement. Second, self-cultivation is not only dependent upon others, but decidedly hard and "fraught with challenges, temptations, and disappointments,"[4] which makes it an arduous life-long project. These two points present challenges that explain the main function of humility, which "is removing unavoidable obstacles from the self-cultivating process."[5]

Li claims that Confucian humility has two parts: "self-focused work and other-focused work"[6] that address challenges having to do with oneself and with social interaction. The main challenge with oneself that Li discusses is "a full sense of self (满, *man*, e.g. knowing all and

[3] Jin Li, "Humility in Learning: A Confucian Perspective," *Journal of Moral Education* 45, no. 2 (April 2, 2016): 147–65, https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2016.1168736. While I have focused on the more philosophical part of Li's essay, it contains interesting discussions of how significant humility is in different culture that interested readers might find thought-provoking.
[4] Li, 152.
[5] Ibid., 153.
[6] Ibid.

controlling all)" that accompanies self-growth. Every improvement we achieve contributes to positive feelings about ourselves, which can potentially lead us to become "overoptimistic, overconfident, more egoistic, harsher and less forgiving toward others' imperfections…"[7] Put differently, achievements we attain may become an obstacle for further improvement, because we feel good about achieving something, and the good feeling can foster our ego. In her memorable words, the self becomes "both the seeker and the impeder for this very process [of self-cultivation]."[8] Humility combats this full sense of self and helps check one's ego "in order to submit oneself whole-heartedly to learning."[9] The main challenge of social interaction is the social impact of achievement. Li cites psychological studies to argue that publicly recognized high achievements can incite ill-will and even impair relationship. Expressing humility through acts such as sharing "the spotlight by thanking the team rather than claiming credit for themselves, approaching people at a lower status with respect and understanding" can ease social tension and maintain relationships.

Li's observations regarding "self-focused work and other-focused work" offer worthy insights for rumination.[10] Nonetheless, the paper focuses on the functional relevance of humility to learning and does not provide an account of humility that synthesizes the numerous observations. What Confucian humility *is* remains only implied, but not stated. Moreover, Li's paper sources discussions from psychology and cultural phenomena and does not focus on any particular texts of early Confucianism. Thus, her paper leaves room for philosophical discussions that center around Confucian texts such as the *Analects*.

[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid., 155.
[10] Ibid., 513.

Alexus McLeod offers such an account that focuses on the *Analects* with brief mention of the *Xunzi*. McLeod argues that humility in Confucianism operates by "primarily being a tool for facilitating harmonious social interactions."[11] McLeod's view shares some similarity with Li's view in that both emphasize the social relevance of humility. However, McLeod more strongly argues that humility is primarily that, a social tool. Importantly, this does not mean that McLeod's view of Confucian humility reduces humility to a matter of social performance (or etiquette) without inner qualities of the psyche. Although humility is mainly for facilitating social harmony, social harmony is not a trivial matter of cohabiting together without conflict, but relates to communal commitments, the social roles one occupies, and identity.[12] Attaining humility, therefore, is not a simple matter of behaving humbly, but requires overcoming the "self" in a certain sense and developing it in another sense.

The sense of self to be eradicated concerns our desire to "self-adore," or "to be perceived as, or to believe oneself to be, different and superior (in some way or multiple ways) to others in the community."[13] Such desire "leads one to separate, to compare, to spurn – and it is thus corrosive to community."[14] At the same time, for humility to effectively facilitate social harmony, it needs to involve proper concern for the self as well, which includes the desire to "self-utilize," or "to integrate into and play a role in the community."[15] Thus, even though Confucian humility is primarily about fostering social harmony, it requires self-cultivation which

[11] Alexus McLeod, "Humility in Early Confucianism," The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Humility (Routledge, June 15, 2020), 247, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351107532-26.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid., 250
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.

on the one hand, overcomes the desire to put oneself over and above others, and on the other hand, develops the desire to consider and make oneself a contributing member of the community.

It seems to me that McLeod's thesis that Confucian humility is primarily social is correct in its focus but misleading in its degree of emphasis. Promoting social harmony does seem to be an important and even indispensable part of Confucian humility. However, it is not clear that Confucian humility is simply that. In other words, there seem to be elements of Confucian humility that are not strictly or primarily about promoting social harmony. One such example is learning and self-cultivation. Per Li's insight, humility checks the full sense of self so that one can continue to learn and improve. This aspect of humility does not have a direct and immediate relationship with promoting social harmony.[16] Thus, while promoting social harmony is clearly important, Confucian humility seems to involve more than that.

Sara Rushing argues for another conceptualization of Confucian humility in the *Analects.*[17] Although it has no corresponding characters or phrases, one can infer Confucian humility from three sub-themes: learning and reflection, realistic self-assessment, and human limitations. Further, Rushing says that Confucian humility "… is reciprocally related to those sub-themes, in as much as humility is also what *enables* one properly to cultivate these essential Confucian orientations."[18] Put differently, Rushing believes that, first, humility can be found in

[16] This is not to deny that promoting social harmony is one of the most important end goals of learning. Thus, more precisely speaking, humility has a direct and immediate relation with learning, but an indirect and remote relation with promoting social harmony. My point, therefore, is that while "promoting social harmony" is no doubt importantly relevant to Confucian humility, it is not always the best explanation for all phenomena about Confucian humility.

[17] Sara Rushing, "What Is Confucian Humility?," in *Virtue Ethics and Confucianism*, ed. Stephen C Angle and Michael Slote (New York: Routledge, 2013), 173–81; Sara Rushing, "Comparative Humilities: Christian, Contemporary, and Confucian Conceptions of a Political Virtue," *Polity* 45, no. 2 (2013): 198–222.

[18] Rushing, "What Is Confucian Humility?," 175. Italics hers.

the three sub-themes in the *Analects*, and, second, humility is "foundational"[19] in the sense of enabling cultivation of other virtues.

Regarding the first sub-theme of learning and reflection, Rushing argues that it requires both deference of judgment "until appropriate learning and reflection has occurred," and a critical attitude that prevents such deference from becoming blind obedience.[20] It is further marked by an openness that is committed to "true listening *first*."[21] All these constitute parts of humility. Realistic self-reflection also comes into play since the focus of learning is to cultivate the self, and a key point of self-cultivation is knowing one's limitation and strengths. This understanding is gained "from an attuned understanding of the larger set of earthly relations and abilities within which one must decide how to conduct oneself" and contribute to the community.[22] What one can in fact contribute and when one should stop have to do with the last theme of human limitations. Rushing argues that in the *Analects*, there is an emphasis in historicity as imposing limitations, that "Confucius believed himself to be out of step with his times."[23] Such limitations should not demoralize oneself or make us "turn entirely inward or to cultivate a joyful attitude in the acceptance of subjection to external forces," but "enable[s] us to understand that our actions can often have only a limited impact … and thus the purpose of acting cannot be determined by the likelihood of success."[24] Rushing argues that this understanding of human limitation and humility enables "proper protest and remonstration" and even "righteous indignation."[25]

[19] Ibid., 175, 176, 180.
[20] Ibid., p176.
[21] Ibid. Italics hers.
[22] Ibid., p178.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., p180.
[25] Ibid., p180.

Rushing usefully introduces realistic self-assessment [26] and historicity into the conversation, and a new perspective on learning that is different from Li's. While Li focuses on humility's function in checking ego, Rushing stresses that humility is important for learning but does not imply blind obedience. Much of what Rushing says makes good sense of Confucian humility. However, I have two small reservations about her account. First, it is not clear why self-assessment should be a separate theme from recognizing human limitations, since the latter is an important conclusion of the former, and in the Confucian context, historicity is an important reference point for making self-assessment. Separating the theme of human limitation from self-assessment seems odd and unnecessary. Second, it is not clear to me why Confucian humility is the foundational virtue of all. One might think humility itself is a result of cultivation and learning, rather than the prerequisite.

Last but not least, Shun presents a comprehensive view of Confucian humility. He garners "humility" related characters and their hundreds of appearances from nineteen Han 漢 Chinese texts, and organizes them into four clusters that discuss variations of pride and three dimensions of humility. Pride can take the form of *jiao* 驕, a self-conception of fullness, which can lead to excessiveness (i.e., *she* 奢, *chi* 侈, and *yin* 淫), laxity (i.e., *yi* 佚, *dai man* 怠慢, and *huan dai* 緩怠), greed, and "adverse comparative judgment on others" (e.g. jiao ren 驕人).[27] Pride can take the form of *ao* 傲, which is related to *jiao* but is more about aloofness and sense of superiority than about others.[28] Pride can take the form of *kua* 夸(and its variant *kua* 侉), *fa* 伐 and *jin* 衿, which concern self-presentation and drawing attention to one's accomplishments

[26] In contrast, McLeod suggests that realistic self-assessment is not necessary. See McLeod, "Humility in Early Confucianism," 250.
[27] Shun, "Dimensions of Humility in Early Confucian Thought," 3.
[28] Ibid., 4.

and contributions so as to "'buy' a reputation and establish a name for oneself."[29] These three terms suggest a self-conception that deserves the high opinion of others, and lead to another set of problems, including the adverse desire to win, an insistence on being right, refusing to admit errors, and so on.[30]

Humility is opposed to pride in all its variations and has three dimensions, which are first, a deflated self-conception; second, caution and fearfulness; and third, seriousness and awe.[31] The deflated sense of self is expressed through *qian* 謙, *bei* 卑 and *rang* 讓. They are about not making a display of success, restraining oneself and yielding to others.[32] Being cautious and fearful is expressed through *shen* 慎, *ju* 懼, *kong* 恐, and *jie* 戒. This theme emphasizes taking an overall preemptive, vigilant stance so that one might avoid the problems caused by pride and laxity regardless of whether the problems are imminent or potential, threatening or minute. Lastly, seriousness and awe are expressed through *gong* 恭, *zhuang* 莊, and *wei* 畏. While *gong* and *zhuang* indicate seriousness in both inner attitude and outer demeanor, *wei* involves a sense of submission towards the objects that inspire *wei*, such as *Tian* 天 and superior persons. Shun argues that all three aspects of humility are encompassed in *jing* 敬, which is

> a posture towards one's life as such, a posture that involves one's seeing one's life as part of a larger ethical whole – one works with a deflated self-conception in all areas of life, exercises ethical caution and fearfulness in the way one conducts oneself, taking seriously this approach to life and at the same time being uplifted by the sense of participation in the Way. This posture of humility, encompassing all its three dimensions

[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid., 5.
[31] Ibid., 1.
[32] Ibid., 6-7.

and not tired to any specific activity or area of life, is the overall posture that constitutes *jing* as a quality of the superior person.[33]

A great deal can be said about Shun's ever-inspiring paper in terms of methodology and content. I offer the following short comments to highlight its uniqueness. Then, I conclude this section by expressing what this paper can contribute in light of the contributions of these four papers on Confucian humility.

Methodologically, Shun's paper shows that Confucian humility is rich, multifaceted, and expressed in various characters. Even if one disagrees with Shun on the relevance of some characters to humility, his study shows that *qian* is not (and if Shun is right, far from) the only point of reference. The paper, therefore, provides a strong answer to McLeod's question of "why then did the Confucians have no single term that we can unproblematically translate across contexts as 'humility'?"[34] It is because first, Confucians take the overall phenomena seriously and deploy numerous terms to capture different aspects of what is generally called "humility;" second, even though there is a variety of terms around the phenomena of "humility," if Shun is right, there is indeed a single term that can be used, namely, *jing*. It seems to me that Shun's paper makes a convincing case that early Chinese texts do not lack terminologies corresponding to "humility," but rather employ a plethora of them to speak more precisely about concrete, related aspects of "humility." Shun's claim that *jing* captures "humility," however, is quite a novel and complicated thesis the proper evaluation of which requires careful and dedicated

[33] Ibid., 15..

[34] McLeod, "Humility in Early Confucianism," 248; Rushing shares the same concern. See Rushing, "What Is Confucian Humility?," 173.

engagement that is beyond scope and focus of this project. I shall, therefore, leave it for rumination.

In terms of content, Shun's account stands out as offering something unique while not mentioning what other scholars take to be important. Shun's conceptualization does not discuss humility in terms of self-cultivation or social interaction. This is partly due to the range of texts where he sources his evidence, some of which, such as *Sunzi Bingfa* 孫子兵法, offers little on self-cultivation. It is also partly due to his focus on moral psychology. This focus allows his detailed claims to shed light on the themes from a psychological perspective, even though he makes no dedicated comments on them. What Shun offers that is unique and not mentioned by other scholars is his discussion on the aspect of caution and fearfulness, and his overall claim of *jing*. While other scholars have in various ways pointed to something similar to what Shun calls a deflated sense of self (i.e., his first aspect of humility) and seriousness (i.e., part of the third aspect), no one has yet pointed out that Confucian humility involves a kind of caution and vigilance against pride and laxity. Furthermore, no one has yet put forward the idea that *jing*, which captures the Confucians' conception of humility, is a posture towards life in general. One of the implications of this claim is that humility is in a certain sense *basic* to all Confucian virtues, practices, and overall outlook. The claim is as inspiring as it is hard to grapple and evaluate.

Where, then, do I stand in relation to the landscape laid out by scholars' work? First, while different scholars pay attention to different themes due to their respective foci and methodologies, the following themes seem to me to speak truly about Confucian humility. They are the theme of learning and self-cultivation highlighted by Li and Rushing, the theme of social interaction by Li, Rushing and McLeod, and the numerous insights by Shun on moral

psychology, the most prominent of which is the aspect of caution and fearfulness. Offering an account that attends to all these themes while explaining an inner logic that connects them will be the first task of this paper. Secondly, the *Analects* also contains an additional element that is not emphasized by previous scholars. This is the element of *li*. To argue and defend the significance of *li* regarding Confucian humility is the second task of this paper. To recall, I argue that in the *Analects*, there are two strands of humility. The first focuses on the agent herself and can be characterized as vigilance rooted in loving learning. The second comes from a keen regard towards others and can be characterized as devotion to responsibility. In both strands, *li* is an indispensable and necessary component. I explicate each claim sequentially below.

3. My View on Confucian Humility in the Analects

3.1 First Strand of Confucian Humility: Vigilance Rooted in Loving Learning

To start with, a basic sense of humility is the ability (and willingness) to acknowledge one's insufficiency, and corresponding reactions in light of such acknowledgement. The kind of reactions that Confucians are especially keen on is the desire to improve oneself. Zigong demonstrates this kind of humility. When being prompted to compare himself with Yan Hui 颜回, who is widely acknowledged to be the best student of Kongzi, Zigong 子貢 replies that he falls far behind (5.9). Zigong in this instance demonstrates clearly an acknowledgment of inferiority. He also demonstrates the desire to improve himself from his engagement with learning (1.15). It is appropriate to say that Zigong has this sense of humility where an awareness of self-insufficiency fosters a desire to improve oneself.

There is a subtler sense of humility where dedication towards learning reveals to the agent the nature of the self-improvement project, which permanently humbles the agent. This sense of humility is rooted in "loving learning" or "*hao xue*/好學." One way to understand what

"loving learning" involves and implies is to contrast it with what is similar but less than it. Zigong provides a case in point.

Zigong, as discussed above, is capable of acknowledging one's insufficiency. However, Zigong's acknowledgement of insufficiency is limited and localized. Zigong is quick to judge others (14.29), and quick to comment that a historically important figure, Guanzhong, is not morally good because he did not die with the lord he served, and ever later served the one who killed his lord. Kongzi points out that generations of people after Guanzhong benefit from his effort in bringing peace to the then-warring world (14.17). In other words, Zigong should appreciate and remember Guanzhong's great contribution, rather than picking out his flaws and expecting him to behave like commoners. These passages show that Zigong is able to acknowledge deficiency when prompted. However, without guidance, he picks out problems and mistakes others made and makes judgments of others based on them, without admitting the good of others or realizing one's comparative inferiority. A way to summarize Zigong's humility is that he is teachable and capable of improvement, since he can be made to become aware of self-insufficiency and does intend to learn. However, he is not a lover of learning, since his self-awareness as well as appreciation of others is limited.

What is the difference between being teachable and being a lover of learning? What accounts for the difference? One significant point that accounts for this difference concerns the attitude and goal of learning. To recall, Zigong likes to judge people. Kongzi responds that Zigong must be a worthy gentleman, for he has no time for judging others (14.29). Shrewd readers of the *Analects* may ask for further explanations because Zigong is not alone in frequently judging others. The text contains countless records of Kongzi, his students, and multiple figures making judgments of each other. Zigong's mistake, therefore, cannot be simply

that he judges others, but has to do with the mistaken goal and attitude of judging. The practice and behavior of making judgments of others is meant for facilitating learning. Learning, as expressed in 14.24, is done for oneself, rather than for others. Zigong's mistake, therefore, is that he fails to keep a constant mind that the practice of judging others is meant for guiding oneself to learn from others and to improve oneself, rather than for criticizing others or claiming superiority of some sort. Returning to Zigong's comment on Guanzhong, it only contains reasons for thinking poorly of Guanzhong without acknowledgement of Guanzhong's important legacy. More importantly, it *ends* with speaking poorly of Guanzhong without any reflection on what could be learned from Guanzhong. Zigong, therefore, is shown to be a learner whose dedication to learning is sporadic, and his desire for learning is mixed with desires unrelated to correcting and improving oneself.

A single-minded, dedicated lover of learning would do differently. They mark the mistakes as well as the good of others. What others have done right and well should not be understated even if they have also made mistakes (14.16, 14.17). Regarding others' mistakes, they do not make a quick and negative judgment of them, but use them to warn oneself. Such is expressed explicitly at 4.17, which instructs: "upon seeing a worthy person, think about how to catch up with them. Upon seeing an unworthy person, introspect upon oneself [to see if one shares similar problems.] 見賢思齊焉，見不賢而內自省也." Other people, whether they are worthy, capable or not, can become targets of learning. This does not mean that one strictly mimics what they do. Rather, one takes inspiration from them to stimulate oneself towards self-improvement. This method of emulation has two specific foci: that one should learn what is good from the worthy, but also examine and rectify oneself when seeing the mistakes of those

unworthy.[35] Put succinctly, the two foci are emulating the good (from others) and rectifying the wrongs (of oneself).

7.22 further elaborates on this attitude as well as method of learning, which says that "when walking with two other people, I am bound to (*bi* 必/must, certainly) find a teacher. Identify their strengths and learn from them, while noticing their weaknesses and change them [in myself]. 三人行，必有我師焉。擇其善者而從之，其不善者而改之." The last two lines of 7.22 speak of the same method and foci of learning. The first two lines, however, provide a context that makes 7.22 more elaborate than 4.17. It says that even among a small group of three people, I am bound to find a teacher. There is no emphasis on identifying the worthy or the unworthy, because others always have something for me to learn from and reflect upon, regardless of who they are. Further, *I* always have something to learn and improve upon. This sense of clear insufficiency is a frequent remark of Kongzi about himself. Read literally, he does not think that he is more diligent (7.33), loyal or trustworthy (5.28) than others. What he has going for him is that he never gets tired of learning, practicing or enjoining others to become good (7.2; 7.34). In his words, he excels at loving learning (5.28).

While Kongzi makes no explicit comments on what "loving learning" is, based on discussion so far, loving learning at least involves the following. First and most basically, it involves teachability, that a lover of learning is capable of acknowledging her own mistakes and has the desire to improve. This implies a sense of self that is not full, but receptive and capable

[35] While this makes good sense, it also seems to be common sense. Nonetheless, such common sense is rarely practiced, especially regarding faults and problems. It is easy to criticize others when others make mistakes and completely forget that one might be prone to commit the same mistakes. See 14.29 for Kongzi's criticism on Zigong 子貢 who is given to criticize others. See 5.27 on how rare it is for people to find faults within oneself.

of learning more.[36] Second, it involves the right view that learning is done for oneself. Learning amounts to nothing less than changing and improving the whole of oneself, and should not be done for impressing others or other motives. Third, it involves the attitude that others can always teach or warn me, and I always need to learn and improve, and the desire for ceaseless learning.[37] This overall package of a right sense of self, right attitude towards learning, right attitude towards others and desire for learning as well as methodology for learning constitutes "loving learning."

Understood this way, loving learning can develop a subtle kind of humility where the agent recognizes that one might never be fully adequate to the total task of learning, and any progress one makes is viewed with caution and vigilance. This sense of humility can be characterized as vigilance rooted in love and dedication to learning. To understand this notion of humility, it is important to appreciate the task of learning.

Learning, as expressed in 14.24, should be done for oneself. As the above discussion indicates, this notion of learning is not merely intellectual or epistemic, but existential in the sense that that which is to be changed and improved is the entire person. From the deepest of one's psychology to the slightest of one's conduct, rarely anything can be left out of the range of learning and improvement. The demand of such a task is difficult to comprehend partly due to its sheer size and scope. I highlight one of the struggles involved in the task that has to do with knowing ourselves. For that, let us go back to Zigong.

[36] This, I suspect, is one reason why Rushing claims that humility is the foundational, prerequisite virtue. My position is that while I agree that teachability is certainly a part of Confucian humility, it is but the basic part of Confucian humility and does not exhaust the complexity of it. See discussion below.

[37] Besides being quick to amend one's mistakes and never making the same mistake twice, this is another reason why Yan Hui is praised as the sole student who loves learning. See 6.3, 9.20, 9.21.

If we imagine how Zigong would react after Kongzi criticizes him for making quick and negative judgments of others, a reasonable guess is that he would stop doing that. Whenever his urge to judge others occurs, he might check himself and recall Kongzi's comments on Guanzhong as a warning that he often fails to appreciate the achievements of others. He might further recall Kongzi's teaching that he should always aim to work on himself and quit the habit of criticizing others. Nonetheless, he may still fail to understand that the problem is not judging others, and cannot be solved by recalling concrete teachings (5.12), for the counter measures deal with manifestations of a wavering mind, rather than changing the attitude and determination that are at the heart of the problems. Even if the specific habit is curbed, the lack of determination could set in motion other problems such as the desire for earning recognition for sake of reputation. In other words, if the deeper problem is not addressed, working on the obvious, superficial problems could hardly make any meaningful progress.

It is easy to retrospectively criticize Zigong from a third-person perspective. Coming down to each individual who desires to change oneself but encounters unique, idiosyncratic problems, how can one be sure whether one is merely addressing manifestations of deeper issues, rather than the issues themselves? The point of Zigong's imaginary reaction is not that Zigong is an utter failure, but that for every individual engaging in the project of changing oneself, there lie deep uncertainties and struggles in the first step of knowing oneself. From a first-person perspective, how do and can we even know that we are in fact identifying and addressing the deeper issue rather than one of its manifestations when we can hardly take an unbiased look upon ourselves? And can we ever be certain that the improvements we made would never be reversed, that we would never repeat the old mistakes we always make due to laziness, arrogance, the recalcitrant nature of habits, or the subtle desire to self-deceive when challenge is high and effort

yields no clear result?[38] These are but some problems of the learning project. Recognizing such weighty challenges of self-cultivation provides us another interpretation of 8.17, with which I summarize this strand of Confucian humility that focuses on the learning agent.

8.17 says that "learn as if you cannot catch up, and with the fear of losing it [i.e. what has attained] 學如不及，猶恐失之." Wang Fuzhi **王夫之** comments that "learn as if you cannot catch up" addresses what one has not learned, while "learn with the fear of losing it" addresses what one has learned.[39] Thus, this passage offers a recommendation that one should be concerned and diligent before *and* after learning something so as to secure knowledge in one's mind. Li Chong **李充** points out one challenge of learning – it does not immediately brings profit, but does make one weary.[40] Miu Xie **繆協** speaks another challenge that the "usefulness" of learning comes about only after persistent striving.[41] The toil of learning and the lack of immediate "return" make it easy for learners to become discouraged and even indolent. For Li and Miu, being concerned and fearful about learning, therefore, helps keep learners on track.

These commentaries treat 8.17 as offering strategic advice for learning better. Based on discussion above, I suggest another interpretation. 8.17 can be descriptive. It describes the first-person experience of a learner who recognizes the weight and difficulty of changing oneself, who speaks that learning and making improvement is so fraught with uncertainty because one does not know whether one has really gotten it. Even after one has made some hard-earned progress, there is a fear of losing it and reversing backward. The kind of self-doubt expressed

[38] In discussion the virtue of accuracy, Williams argues that the major challenge to accuracy is the desire to self-deceive when uncertainty piles up and effort yields no clear progress. See Williams, xxx, xxx.
[39] See Cheng 程, *Lun Yu Ji Shi 論語集釋*, 546.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.

here is not the kind that endlessly questions (and subsequently rejects) every single bit of one's moral progress. Rather, such awareness of the challenge and demand of the learning project already marks a certain moral state of development that likely goes amiss by learners not yet dedicated and developed. Thus, I contend that the kind of self-doubt we see here expresses vigilance, alertness, and caution based on a clear awareness that changing oneself is an on-going struggle with oneself.[42] Progress is marked as progress but does not give the confidence that "I" am thereby *good.* The journey of self-cultivation forever continues. Such vigilance of oneself is rooted in deep and active engagement with learning or in short, love of learning in the sense discussed above.

In summary, we see one strand of Confucian humility that focuses on improving oneself. There is the basic kind where acknowledgement of self-insufficiency gives motivation to improve oneself. There is a subtler kind coming out of dedication and love towards learning. It is through prolonged engagement and unabated desires towards learning that one appreciates the difficulties and struggles of changing oneself. Such realization humbles the agent and generates an overall posture of vigilance and watchfulness. The subtler kind of humility is more prevalent in and unique to the *Analects*, and can be characterized as vigilance rooted in loving learning.

3.2. Second Strand of Confucian Humility: Devotion to Responsibility

In contrast to the first strand of Confucian humility, the second strand does not take the self as the object of concern. Rather, it redirects one's attention away from oneself towards other people and matters. This is not to say that other people are not important in the first strand. Already present in the discussion of loving learning is a need for others. The recognition of self-insufficiency and the great difficulties of changing oneself is at the same time a recognition that

[42] See also 8.3 where Zengzi cites lines from the *Odes*, which goes: "fearful! Trembling! As if looking down into a deep abyss, as if walking on thin ice."

"I" need help from others. Nonetheless, as 4.22 and 7.12 make clear, considerations of others serve to inspire or warn oneself. Other people are worthy objects of learning for self-improvement, and attention is given to how *I* can improve. In the second strand of humility, various concerns of the self recede and give space to consideration of other people and matters in terms of their needs and demands. The starting point for understanding the second strand is an awareness that others are equally capable of helping and harming us. Allow me to elaborate.

The help we receive from others range far and deep. In fact, we receive help ever since we are born. Kongzi points out that babes born into the world require three years of fostering from parents before they can leave parents' cradle and we should remember this fact with deep gratitude (17.21). As we grow up, different people with different relations enter our lives. They make obvious the problems we have but cannot see, stimulate us with ideas we understand but have not thought of (3.8), inspire and motivate us when we doubt our path (15.2), and accompany and provide us indispensable human warmth through disappointments and sorrow (9.12).

Other than contemporaries living in the same age as us, we also receive help from ancestors whose contributions benefit generations afterwards. Here, the discussion of Guanzhong takes on a new significance. Kongzi says that Guanzhong united the battling states. "Were it not for [him], we would be wearing our hair loose and fastening our robes on the left 微管仲，吾其被髮左衽矣" (14.17). In other words, Guanzhong's effort preserves Zhou cultural practices which eventually get passed down to Kongzi. Presumably, many of the practices continue to be general cultural knowledge that is familiar to Kongzi's contemporaries and students, even though the practices are under threat of being broken and forgotten. Such familiarity may leave the impression that the cultural continuity is normal, expected, and nothing special. Kongzi's

comment points out that certain facts of one's life that are taken for granted would have been drastically different and are in fact significant contributions of predecessors, to whom one should remain grateful.

In Kongzi, this recognition of help and inherited benefits find a further development that goes beyond concrete individuals (whether contemporary or historical) and develops into the realm of culture. Kongzi speaks dearly and fondly of the Zhou culture (3.14, 8.20, 15.11). Such fondness, however, is based on learned and considered judgment that Zhou 周 has critically examined and learned from (*jian* 監) the two dynasties before it (3.14), especially regarding *li* (2.23). While the text does not offer concrete comments on the cultural splendor of Zhou, it is clear that Kongzi was deeply impressed, and most likely considered himself a great beneficiary such that becomes a whole-hearted follower and transmitter of Zhou (3.14). This marks the far end of the help and inherited benefits we receive.[43]

This, importantly, is not to say that all the influences we receive from others are simply positive. In the *Analects*, misunderstandings, negligence, and disappointments abound. For instance, Kongzi himself has never attained any meaningful political position to execute his vision, and is mocked by his contemporaries as such (2.21). His numerous trips for attaining positions not only end up in failure, but even incur multiple death threats (9.5, 7.23, 15.2). Other than being neglected and silenced in his political pursuits, he also laments a lack of recognition and understanding by his contemporaries and even his students. When he gets exhausted and toys with the idea of giving up and floating a boat in the sea where perhaps only Zilu, one of his

[43] It is important to note that Kongzi might also consider himself a beneficiary of *Tian* 天 in certain ways. However, passages about *Tian* are quite elusive to say anything concrete that I leave the discussion for another time.

students, would follow, Zilu rejoices that he is mentioned but fails to recognize his teacher's looming disappointment (5.7).

Last but not least, analogous to how part of the benefits we receive comes from the overall cultural environment, part of the harm and discouragement also comes from the overall political atmosphere, which one can only recognize but not control. The text indicates a political atmosphere where ritual rules that mark hierarchies are manipulated to claim superiority (3.1-2, 3.6), and political efforts are devoted to usurping power (16.1), enriching wealth (11.17), making excuses (18.3) and claiming innocence (3.6, 16.1). In such an environment, efforts for rectifying the political culture seem futile and meaningless because the overall environment would "kick back" any progress one has made. This manifests in Kongzi's students, who, despite Kongzi's best efforts, are nonetheless encouraged to find excuses for not making an effort (6.12), seriously tempted by wealth, status, and power, and have a hard time focusing on learning for learning's sake (8.12).

Other people and the world one lives in can have these two directions of impact on the agent. However, the agent is not simply on the receiving end of others' influence. She also generates influence and impacts others. Not only does she depend and rely on others, but others depend and rely on her as well. This means, therefore, that the agent can also become, or simply is a source of inspiration or disappointment for others, just as others can be and are to her. If all the disappointments and sorrow have not extinguished one's keen regard towards others and the world in general (and it must be admitted that this can be a big "if"), this understanding of social interdependence and the impact one could generate create a sense of responsibility to which the agent ideally lives up. The responsibility can be conceptually understood as having two directions (even though in practice such a distinction may not hold). On the one hand, the agent

gives due acknowledgement to the helps and benefits one receives and reciprocate in ways fitting to the benefactors. On the other hand, the agent practices due diligence to avoid harming others and becoming another source of disappointment in the world. Ideally, such thoughts are kept in the mind of the agent when one interacts with others in daily life. What one concretely does to convey humility depends on the roles one occupies. Nonetheless, there is a common theme. One gives up self-centered concerns in the sense of not having a disproportionately large sense of self-importance and acknowledges the importance of others against whom one is no less but no more than one potential contributing factor. Most importantly, one should redirect attention to duty and responsibility generated by the roles and needs and demands of others, and let them become a guide to one's deliberation and conduct.

The *Analects* provides passages that record this sense of humility towards others. One noticeable passage is Zengzi famously saying that "every day I examine myself on three counts: in my dealing with others, have I in anyway failed to be dutiful? In my interactions with friends and associates, have I in any way failed to be trustworthy? Finally, have I in any way failed to repeatedly put into practice what I teach?" (1.4)[44] Found in such regular scrutiny is a serious learning attitude that resonates with the first strand of Confucian humility where presumably, one's conduct as well as the whole psychology behind it is subject to earnest reflection. Furthermore, we see an unmistakable attention to one's responsibility towards others. The questions are not formulated as whether *I* have done well out of certain virtues that *I* possess, but whether I have done well *towards others*, which implies a prioritization of others and of the matters at hand. Thus formulated, these questions do not welcome answers such as "I have been acting trustworthily even though my friends cannot trust me," according to which acting out of a

[44] Slingerland, *Confucius Analects*, 2.

virtuous state could end ethical scrutiny with satisfaction. There can certainly be circumstances where I am indeed trustworthy, but my friends cannot trust me because of misunderstanding, miscommunication, or other interfering factors. The point, however, is that meeting the needs and demands of others takes priority in determining deliberation and evaluation of my character and my acts. To simply reflect on whether "I" have done well independent of consideration of others marks a wrong way of thinking.

This mentality of downplaying the self and emphasizing duty and responsibility receives a further development in Kongzi. His admiration for Zhou culture not only makes him a dedicated follower and transmitter, but also directs his attention solely towards passing down the cultural inheritance such that he does not ponder whether his life-long effort has made any new contribution. In his words, he "transmits and does not innovate, trusts and loves the ancients, and compare himself to Old Peng. 述而不作，信而好古，竊比於我老彭" (7.1). Whether Kongzi has indeed been a mere transmitter or an innovator in some way is less important than the fact that he does not consider himself as an innovator. This indicates that what Kongzi cares about is not whether *he* has made contributions, but whether the ancient culture is preserved and transmitted. The consideration of self in terms of credit and attribution recedes and does not occupy the forefront of one's attention. Instead, responsibility as a culture transmitter is the front and center concern.

In summary, there is another strand of Confucian humility that may be characterized as devotion to responsibility. We are helped and hurt by people and the general environment in various ways. However, we are more than receivers of influence. We influence others and partake in shaping the environment as well. Our capacity to be either a source of inspiration or disappointment implies a sense of responsibility towards others. Ideally, we acknowledge those

whose help, supports, and legacies greatly benefited us and many others, and try to reciprocate what we have received in ways fitting to the debt we owe. At the same time, we take caution against potential ways in which we might exert negative influence on others, including inconvenience, burden, harm, and disappointment. Concretely, this implies attention and dedication to obligations of roles, and the needs and demands of others (such as parents, children, and friends) or unique objects (such as transmission of culture). It accompanies a recession of self-concern that takes various forms, such as giving others an equal weight in the deliberation of my action, and not being concerned about one's contribution and credit at all.

To recapitulate, the two strands of Confucian humility are vigilance rooted in love of learning, and devotion to responsibility. The first strand focuses on the agent herself regarding her attitude and desire for self-cultivation, while the second strand focuses on the responsibilities one has or partakes and gives limited attention to oneself. This disparity on the attention on oneself does not imply that the two strands happen in different situations and do not cooccur. Given that cultivation and self-improvement require the help of others and often times, take place through collaboration with others, vigilance in self-cultivation (i.e., the first strand) can blend with devotion to matters at hand (i.e., the second strand). Thus, trying to work to become a better son by listening to parents (i.e., vigilance in one's insufficiency and desiring to improve) takes place through devoting time and energy to listening to parents (i.e., devotion to responsibility). Given that some of the significant challenges in fulfilling one's duty come from problems of oneself, devotion to responsibility (i.e., the second strand) can help develop vigilance and reflection of self (i.e., the first strand). For instance, a general unwillingness to admit one's mistakes might start to give in when devotion to a certain project at hand leads one

to self-realization. Thus, even though the two strands have their unique features and objects of attention, they often work together and foster each other in practice.

3.3. On the Significance of *Li* 禮

One theme that is present in both strands of humility is a recognition of the significance of others. Others can teach us with their strengths, warn us in light of their weaknesses, help us by their inspiring words and examples, or harm us through misunderstanding, negligence, and wrongs. Even in the first strand where the focus is on learning and improving oneself, learning still happens with others. Confucian humility, therefore, is fundamentally social in terms of cultivation (i.e., an agent cannot develop it on one's own) and constitution (i.e., others, ranging from contemporary people, historical people, to those whose legacies indicate their existence, are a significant part of both strands). There is, importantly, one further sense in which Confucian humility is fundamentally social, which concerns perception.

Whether it's an expression of self-insufficiency, an acknowledgement of others' contribution and one's comparative insignificance, or caution and carefulness when things seem to fall in line with one's expectation, there lies a matter of communication that can either make one's act be recognized as conveying humility or be misunderstood as something else. Even if an act is recognized as conveying humility, its effects are still subject to perceptions that can be influenced by how the act is conducted. In the Confucian context, all these considerations are handled and complicated by the central concept and practice of *li* 禮.

The first point to emphasize is that systematically unperceived humility is arguably equivalent to non-existent in the social setting where Confucians devote their primary attention. Analogous to Aristotle's thought experiment in which a virtuous sleeping agent, because her virtues are completely dormant, cannot really be distinguished from a sleeping villain, a truly

humble person whose humility systematically fails to be perceived cannot be effectively distinguished from someone who is not humble. There are no meaningful ways for people to recognize the humility of a truly humble person who lives in mountains her whole life. Thus, in the social setting where people live and interact, such a person's humility is non-existent.[45] In fact, perception is so important to Confucians that if someone with genuine humility systematically fails to *communicate* humility and gets misrecognized as not being humble, there arise serious questions as to whether she truly is humble.[46] The importance of perception and relatedly, communication, explains why the social and culturally shared set of tools for communication, namely, *li*, is necessary for Confucian humility. *Li* enables subtle communications peculiar to members with a shared set of cultural practices. It facilitates social communication and recognition of each other. Thus, as long as social communication and recognition of humility matter, *li* matters to humility.

To further illustrate the significance of *li* to Confucian humility, let us consider Kongzi's claims of self-deficiency as examples of humility. Kongzi has a list of remarks about how he is not good enough. For instance, he comments that he is not born with the sharpest mind (7.28), not quite exemplary (7.33), not courageous or free of confusions (14.28), and certainly not *ren* 仁/Good, or *sheng* 聖/sage-like (7.34, 14.28). There are many possible interpretations of these claims. For instance, they might serve as reminders that check one's tendency to arrogance or vanity. They might also be sincere expressions that Kongzi indeed does not consider himself as

[45] A counter case might be made in the conceptual territory. For instance, this person might be one of those who are born with knowledge (7.29, 16.9) and chooses to model his life after those past exemplars who live their lives away from society and avoid the corrupted age (18.5, 18.6, 18.8). No one knows him, and yet he truly is humble (and in fact, even a sage). A Confucian might respond with a genuine appreciation and admiration of that choice of life, but quickly move on. Since that person does not live in the society where the Confucians live, that person's humility might be another kind of humility, but not Confucian humility.

[46] While this might seem like a peculiar Confucian stance, I contend that as long as we are social beings where communication and recognition matters, the Confucian intuition is not unreasonable but makes good sense.

possessing those qualities. I explore another possibility, that when Kongzi speaks of these claims, he speaks from the role of a teacher and with a pedagogical purpose to further encourage his students.

The social context behind the interactions of Kongzi and his students is that Kongzi is the teacher who is also older than his students, both of which register important hierarchical superiorities of the time. Kongzi's claim of insufficiency should be understood in this context that he is not simply speaking of his insufficiency, but gesturing with a respectful and considerate attitude towards his students. Shun explains that such a gesture

> … is not a matter of our believing ourselves to be literally in a lower position. Rather, it is a matter of our shifting our attention away from ourselves toward others, in a way that is akin to one's attitude when interacting with people in a higher position. Such redirection of attention is particularly important for those actually in a higher social position, as it is particularly tempting for them to treat those in a lower social position in a disrespectful manner.[47]

Read this way, Kongzi's claim of self-insufficiency does not literally mean that he falls woefully short of all the named qualities, but expresses certain pedagogical messages. It could mean that even the teacher, who is vastly superior in cultivation and older in age, falls short of being virtuous and continues to work on self-cultivation. There is no reason for students not to be diligent.[48] It could also mean that students need not feel pressured by the task of learning: If the teacher, who is vastly superior, also falls short, students can feel better about their own struggles

[47] Kwong-loi Shun, "Early Confucian Moral Psychology," in *Dao Companion to Classical Confucian Philosophy*, ed. Vincent Shen, Dao Companions to Chinese Philosophy (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2014), 274, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-2936-2_12.

[48] This is how Zhu Xi 朱熹 reads 14.28, that Kongzi "criticizes himself to urge others. 自责以勉人." See Cheng 程, *Lun Yu Ji Shi 論語集釋*, 1011.

and more comfortable to speak their mind.[49] When this practice is consistently and skillfully enacted, students may even feel comfortable arguing with the teacher when they think the teacher makes mistakes, which is conducive to a learning environment from which both the teacher and students can benefit.

This, however, marks one set of possibilities where Kongzi's claims of self-insufficiency are conducive to learning. It is equally possible, however, that these claims put further pressure on students. It is also possible for these claims to be received as impressing on his students just how radically hard learning is, and thereby amplifying pressure. Last but not least, let us not forget the potential danger of claiming self-deficiency that others might thereby think less of the person and take lightly of her opinion. While this is less likely to happen for Kongzi, especially when he is among his students, it remains a live possibility that signifies the ways in which good intention can be understood in unintended directions.

Put simply, humility can be misrecognized, regardless of how well-developed it is in the agent. How to ensure that humility does not come off in the wrong ways requires more than having the right inner states, but skills that enable effective communication and embodied knowledge in the shared social/cultural language. In other words, humility requires proper inner states, but also *li* 禮. Neither can be absent. Neither can replace the other.

[49] The fact that Kongzi is aware of his social position and its impact on his students is made clear in 11.36 where he openly tells students that they should not hesitate to speak their mind because he is older. It is a different pedagogical strategy than the one discussed here. Another important point is that such gesture of humility could "backfire" and cause more pressure students. See discussion at the end.

4. Implications and Conclusion

In conclusion, Confucian humility has two strands that are distinct yet interact with each other. They are vigilance rooted in love of learning and devotion towards responsibilities. When they are effectively expressed through *li*, they are recognized as Confucian humility.

To elaborate on the implications of this conclusion, I discuss how my account relates to the four scholarly views discussed in section two. First, I agree with Li on her discussion that learning is deeply connected with humility, and incorporate Shun's point about caution to further elaborate her insight that humility continues to be important even when a learner has made notable progress. I also agree with on her general point that humility has a dimension intimately involved in social interaction. This is also McLeod's general position that Confucian humility is conducive to fostering social harmony. While Li and McLeod emphasize the significance of humility in fostering social harmony, I delineate areas where humility can be present, ranging from social interaction to acknowledgement of ancestors' contribution, to inheritance of culture.

Then, regarding Rushing's account, I take heed of her point that Confucian humility can be found in learning and self-cultivation. Whereas she argues that humility in learning is partly demonstrated in the willingness to listen, I offer a different angle that humility is also manifested in a self-critical attitude. My account also offers another explanation to her claim that Confucian humility is foundational, to which I will return after a discussion with Shun's paper.

As for Shun's paper, I incorporate some of its insights into my account, especially the aspect of caution and vigilance. Shun has given numerous textual supports to show that such an attitude is prevalent in many different aspects. Focusing on the *Analects*, I have identified this attitude and emotion most strongly in learning. I am struck by Shun's view that Confucian humility has a global significance in Confucianism. Rather than being a more-or-less isolated

virtue found in a certain specific area, Shun considers Confucian humility to be a general "posture towards one's life as such."[50] While I have not argued for it, my account implies a different explanation of the general significance of Confucian humility. The two strands of humility combined form a running theme behind various Confucian virtues. The caution against self in one's development and cultivation and devotion towards one's responsibilities not only contribute to developing various Confucian virtues such as *xiao*, *zhong*, and *yi*, but are a part of what it means to be a good child, a good friend, (later on) a good parent, a good servant, and overall, a good Confucian.[51] This is another sense in which Confucian humility is foundational, that it partly constitutes various Confucian virtues.

Last but not least, as a general addition to all four papers, I highlight the significance of *li* to Confucian humility. Put briefly, *li* is a necessary component of Confucian humility. This implies that the inner states, no matter how elaborate, are not sufficient to capture the complexity of Confucian humility.[52] This also implies, however, that Confucian humility becomes complicated with this element of *li*. In addition to the issues of effective communication that I discussed above, there is also a complication that actions that seem like an expression of humility, such as the courtly etiquette of meeting the lord, might be simply a matter of *li*

[50] Shun, "Dimensions of Humility in Early Confucian Thought," 15.

[51] It is equally possible that such an encompassing notion of humility might be too board and potentially include qualities that are not humility. For instance, devotion to responsibilities might lead to (proper) pride because those who are fully devoted to roles they occupy, such as being a good father, might take pride in having good relationships. (Proper) pride, while not necessary contradictory to humility, is certainly not humility. This idea of Confucian humility as a potential running theme across all Confucian virtues, therefore, remains a possibility that awaits further development. I thank Sean Walsh for offering the example and the counter argument.

[52] If my claim that *li* is important to humility as long as communication and perception is important to humility, there comes an interesting implication. Given that *li* is unique to each culture, humility can have significant variations across culture, especially in how it is culturally valued, expressed, and understood. The value (or the lack of value), degrees of cultural significance, and critique of humility would thereby be different in different cultures. This is not implying any sort of cultural relativism as if humility has no shared content. Rather, this is saying that the discussions (and our understanding) of humility could be greatly enriched by incorporating perspectives from different cultures. I thank Sun Weimin for pointing this out for me.

performance rather than humility.[53] However, if I am on the right track that Confucian humility takes seriously issues of communication, recognition, and therefore, *li*, all these complexities only point to the richness of Confucian humility, rather than adding unnecessary confusions that are not pertinent.

[53] I thank Sean Walsh for raising this point.

Bibliography

Alfano, Mark, Michael P. Lynch, and Alessandra Tanesini, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Humility*. Routledge Handbooks in Philosophy. Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2020.

Ames, Roger T., and Henry Rosemont, trans. *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation*. 1st trade pbk. ed. Classics of Ancient China. New York: Ballantine Books, 1999.

Cheng 程, Shude 樹德. *Lun Yu Ji Shi 論語集釋*. Edited by Junying 俊英 Cheng 程 and Jianyuan 見元 Jiang 蔣. Xin Bian Zhu Zi Ji Cheng. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shu ju : Xin hua shu dian Beijing fa xing suo fa xing 新華書店：北京發行所發行, 1990.

Confucius, E. Bruce Brooks, and A. Taeko Brooks. *The Original Analects: Sayings of Confucius and His Successors*. Translations from the Asian Classics. New York [Great Britain]: Columbia University Press, 1998.

Li, Jin. "Humility in Learning: A Confucian Perspective." *Journal of Moral Education* 45, no. 2 (April 2, 2016): 147–65. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2016.1168736.

Li 李, Ling 零. *Sang Jia Gou: Wo Du "Lun Yu" 丧家犬 -- 我读《论语》*. Xiu ding ban, di 1 ban. Taiyuan: Shanxi ren min chu ban she, 2007.

McLeod, Alexus. "Humility in Early Confucianism." The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Humility. Routledge, June 15, 2020. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351107532-26.

Rushing, Sara. "Comparative Humilities: Christian, Contemporary, and Confucian Conceptions of a Political Virtue." *Polity* 45, no. 2 (2013): 198–222.

———. "What Is Confucian Humility?" In *Virtue Ethics and Confucianism*, edited by Stephen C Angle and Michael Slote, 173–81. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Shun, Kwong-loi. "Dimensions of Humility in Early Confucian Thought." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, February 10, 2021, 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1163/15406253-12340001.

———. "Early Confucian Moral Psychology." In *Dao Companion to Classical Confucian Philosophy*, edited by Vincent Shen, 263–89. Dao Companions to Chinese Philosophy. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2014. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-2936-2_12.

Slingerland, Edward G., trans. *Confucius Analects: With Selection from Traditional Commentaries*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub. Co, 2003.

Snow, Nancy E. "Theories of Humility: An Overview." The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Humility. Routledge, June 15, 2020. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351107532-3.

Sun 孙, Qinshan 钦善. *Lun Yu Ben Jie 论语本解*. Xiu ding ban. Beijing Shi: Sheng huo - du shu - xin zhi san lian shu dian, 2013.

Wong, David B. "Relational and Autonomous Selves." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 31, no. 4 (December 2004): 419–32. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6253.2004.00163.x.

Wright, Jennifer Cole, ed. *Humility*. The Virtues: Multidisciplinary Perspectives. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Paper Three: How We Need Others: A Defense of Strong Relational Virtue

Wenhui Xie

1. Introduction

In one of his recent papers, Sungwoo Um proposes "relational virtue" as a sub-category of virtues, and defends a version of relational virtue. Purposefully choosing Christine Swanton's open and pluralistic notion of virtue, Um argues that relational virtue is a distinct category of virtue and differs from other virtues by having a unique sphere of care and concern, namely, "one's intimates and the relationship with them."[1] Relational virtues are not general virtues such as generosity, which are concerned with others' needs but not in a relational way. Instead, relational virtues are the excellent qualities of agents that we see in intimate relationships such as friendship, the parent-child relationship, and so on. Um suggests, and I agree, that relational virtue provides "a valuable resource for answering questions concerning the value of intimate relationships."[2] This paper follows Um's initiative, but presents a stronger version of relational virtue than that of Um's. Um considers relational virtue to be fully constituted by the excellent disposition of an agent, but I argue for a view of relational virtue wherein disposition alone is only one necessary part of having a relational virtue. For an agent to be relationally virtuous, she needs to have not only the disposition, but also acknowledgement from intimate others, with public acknowledgement coming in when serious moral mistakes occur.

As controversial as my view of relational virute may initially seem, it is developed from features of intimate relationships that are taken as the basic "data" for moral theorizing. It is imperative, therefore, to first provide discussion of the features of intimate relationship, especially "relational responses," and what it means to take them as the basic "data." This discussion forms section one. Then, in section two, I draw the connection between relational response and relational virtue, elaborating and defending my view with three arguments. In section three, I turn to a serious problem where acknowledgement from intimate others is either impossible or should not be credited, and demonstrate how even in this kind of extreme case, acknowledgement from intimate others is still important and irreplaceable. Lastly, I summarize and draw out implications of my view for other virtues that are not rooted in intimate relationships.

2. Preliminary Reflections on Intimate and Deep Relationships

It is characteristic of those bonded in a deep relationship that they establish and recognize certain intimate parameters such as requirements, expectations, and patterns of interaction. Some of the parameters are interpersonal and used only inside the relationship. For instance, my

[1] Sungwoo Um, "What Is a Relational Virtue?," *Philosophical Studies* 178, no. 1 (January 1, 2021): 97, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-020-01422-1.
[2] Um, 95.

brother has a signature high-pitched sigh when reluctantly responding to my requests, a way of sighing that he does not use when working. Some parameters are formed by personal pet peeves. For instance, my mothoer hates when the bottoms of the family's cooking pans and pots get dirty, not because of potential functional defects, but because of the cookware's ugly appearance. Even though she knows that keeping the bottoms clean is almost impossible due to normal wear and tear, she makes it clear that anyone using the pots and pans should wash the bottoms and keep them free from stains as much as possible, even for white glass cookware.

Importantly, whether they are personal pet peeves or interpersonal patterns of interaction, these parameters are recognized by everyone involved in the relationship as carrying "coded" meanings, idiosyncratically assigned values, and a certain normative force. My brother's signature sigh gives me messages that my parents sometimes do not pick up. While that sound typically means that he is reluctant, I can tell from subtle variations in how he makes the sound whether he is still willing to do as I request or whether I should simply give up. My brother and I, therefore, may appear to my parents to be engaged in a pointless tug-of-war with repeated phrases such as "Let's go" and "no," while both of us know that the really meaningful communication is happening not through the explicit sentences and words, but in the subtle variations of that sound he makes and the pushes I give back. My mother's pet peeve is not only her personal pet peeve, but recognized by my whole family – indeed, so well known that whenever I wash dishes, I can hear my mother voicing her concerns even when she is not present. The most important aspect of these intimate parameters for my purposes, however, is their "intimate" nature and the normativity they generate.

The establishment and recognition of this kind of parameters is intimate. By "intimate," part of what I mean is that such relational parameters are private and known only by those

involved because the parameters are established solely by those involved. As explained in the discussion above, even my parents do not pick up the message embedded in my brother's sigh. They do not know our subtle communication because it is a pattern of interaction established by me and my brother alone. Neither of us can recall how this pattern came into being, nor can I elucidate it to others in a way that, say, would allow my parents to interact with my brother the way that I do. This leads to the second aspect of "intimacy."

The established parameters I here describe often only occur in the unique setting of relationship. Explaining to my parents how my brother and I negotiate his reluctance does not allow them to interact with my brother the way I do because it is a pattern that only occurs in our relationship. When my parents ask my brother to do something he does not want to do, his reluctance manifests in a different way that is anchored in my brother's relationship with my parents. Outside of the context of our relationship – namely, when someone else asks my brother to do something against his desire – he either does not sigh, or does so in a significantly different way.

Finally, a third aspect of "intimacy" is that all the embedded meanings, values and normative force of relational parameters are applicable and relevant only to those involved. Outsiders do not have a responsibility to take up, recognize, or enact the intimate values and normative requirements, whether they know them or not. For instance, my mother does not extend her requirement to anyone outside of my family, even though some of my relatives know of her pet peeve. Others can certainly offer to help because of courtesy, kindness, kinship, or various other reasons. However, even if they offer to help, neither do they have the responsibility to clean pots and pans up to my mother's standard, nor does she lay the requirement on them. It

is only those who are considered specially related members – in this case, my family members – who have this responsibility.

To summarize, I give the notion of intimate relationship that I assume in this paper as follows: While an intimate relationship often develops after a long acquaintance and shared history, it has a depth that separates it from other relationships that may last equally long. The depth of an intimate relationship is revealed in: 1) the development of exclusive patterns of interaction that only exist within the relationship; 2) exceptionally close and familiar knowledge of the bonded others, down to their pet peeves, habits of behavior, rarely spoken values, and ways of thinking; 3) an enhanced or intensified care and concern for bonded others, which presents a strong motivation for responding to their needs, desires, and demands, even where these are idiosyncratic or unusual. Intimate relationships may have other qualities not included here, but these form the basic and prosaic observation on which my analysis rests.

One may ask why bonded people have a special responsibility to tend to the idiosyncratic habits, preferences, and values of each other, a responsibility that no one else shares. One answer is found in the nature of intimate relationships, where the care and concern for another motivates those involved to tend to each others' idiosyncrasies. However, one may push for further justification for the normative force we feel in our tending to an intimate other's idiosyncrasies. That is, because this normative force is unusually strong, even as it incorporates idiosyncrasies that could never be generally binding or motivating, we may wish for a detailed and elaborate justification. However, this question of justification is, in my view, ultimately bizarre. Let me clarify my basic claim, and then turn to the oddity of seeking justification.

I do not argue that we have a general moral responsibility – such as behaving respectfully, enacting empathy, and perhaps contributing to the general welfare of others –

towards any and every one with whom we have a relationship. The claim that relationships in general, regardless of their nature, necessarily generate moral responsibility is highly controversial and, more relevantly, not my claim.[3] It is much less controversial and widely acknowledged that we have a general moral responsibility towards those with whom we have deep and intimate relationships. For instance, we should care for the general well-being of intimately bonded people and in the absence of conflicts among our moral duties, we should prioritize caring for our intimates over strangers.[4] This is a position that I assume to be correct, but not where my claim rests. I claim that we have a *specific and tailored* responsibility towards *intimate others* to attend to the idiosyncratic values, meanings, patterns of interactions mutually established and recognized in the intimate relationship, and no one else has this responsibility.[5] It is a kind of *relational response* pertaining exclusively to those involved in the intimate relationship. Put concretely, I should not only care about my mother's overall health and general well-being, but also attend to her pet peeve. I should clean well the bottoms of pots and pans at

[3] See James Kellenberger, *Relationship Morality* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995) for a defense on a similar view. Note that even Kellenberger admits difficulty in the case of having moral responsibility towards enemy.

[4] How to justify partiality receives great scholarly attention. For recent scholarly conversations, see Stephen Darwell, "Responsibility within Relations," in *Partiality and Impartiality*, ed. Brian Feltham and John Cottingham (Oxford University Press, 2010), 150–68, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199579952.001.0001; Simon Keller, *Partiality*, Princeton Monographs in Philosophy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); Maria A. Carrasco, "Morality, Impartiality and Due Partialities," *Journal of Value Inquiry* 49, no. 4 (2015): 667–89, http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10790-015-9523-8; Errol Lord, "Justifying Partiality," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 19, no. 3 (2016): 569–90; Sungwoo Um, "Solving the Puzzle of Partiality," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 52, no. 3 (2021): 362–76, https://doi.org/10.1111/josp.12367. For discussions on which relationship deserves partial treatment, see Niko Kolodny, "Which Relationships Justify Partiality? The Case of Parents and Children," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 38, no. 1 (January 2010): 37–75, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1088-4963.2009.01173.x; Niko Kolodny, "Which Relationships Justify Partiality? General Considerations and Problem Cases," in *Partiality and Impartiality*, ed. Brian Feltham and John Cottingham (Oxford University Press, 2010), 169–93, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199579952.001.0001.

[5] Responsibility, with its common connotation of Kantian duty, may be too crude a word that renders the care, concern, and unique regard of each other characteristic of intimate relationships unintelligible or even irrelevant.

home when I wash dishes, and my mother can rightly complain against me when I do not do it well.

Once my claim is made clear, it should also become clear that having relational responsiveness in intimate relationship is nothing but an ordinary, common practice, a prosaic element in how we behave within intimate relationships. It is on this basis that I consider relational responses among the "basic data" of human life that moral theorizing needs to observe and explain rather than justify. Put another way, I think any arguments against the normative value of relational responsiveness would founder and fail owing to the ubiquity of this aspect of human relationships. While my examples are clearly personal, they seem to me examples of a universal practice within intimate relationships, reflective of wider patterns wherein people reveal, establish, acknowledge, negotiate, tolerate, and satisfy each other's idiosyncrasies. As an intimate relationship undergoes formation, those bonded gradually reveal their individuality and establish unique patterns of interaction. The more intimate a relationship is, the more idiosyncratic sides of a person get revealed, and the more idiosyncratic patterns of interaction are developed. During the process, the needs and wants of each other cease to be personal matters but bear on each other's psychology and identity as their own matters. Negotiation, tolerance and satisfaction of each other's idiosyncrasies take place and gradually becomes commonplace.[6] Arguably, how satisfying and fulfilling the relationship is partly depends on how well the unique personal quirks and interaction patterns are attended and taken care of. Thus, it seems to me that relational response where bonded people tend to each other's idiosyncrasies is inherent to

[6] See Um, "Solving the Puzzle of Partiality," 371–74 where he discusses what he calls the "reflexive structure" of intimate relationship, a structure that makes the welfare and interests of intimately related others part of each other's welfare and interests such that a clear demarcation of "self" and "others" becomes hard to identify and maintain.

intimate relationships. Put differently, having an intimate relationship involves as its essential part this special responsibility that I term "relational response." To the extent that moral theorizing should start with the basic and important phenomena of life, relational response, as a basic phenomenon of intimate relationship, is the foot to the shoe of moral theories. It not only does not need justification from different moral theories, but can be taken as a shape that would modify any theories that fail to capture its significance and relevance. Asking why those intimately connected people should be responsible for each other's idiosyncrasies shows a failure in understanding what an intimate relationship is, and an ardent commitment to moral justification that is, in my opinion, wrong in its direction.[7]

To further develop alone the line of observation and explanation rather than justification, note again that relational responsiveness pertains to the kind of behavioral exchanges in which bonded people attend to each other's idiosyncrasies and interact in uniquely interpersonal patterns. Both of these may, in principle, be known by non-intimate bystanders, but it is unlikely in practice. I make two of the following observations.

First, a result of such intimacy and privacy is that only an intimate other can evaluate and determine whether their personal needs, unspoken expectations, values, and shared rituals are recognized or dismissed, and how well they are attended to by the agent. I, as the agent, cannot claim to have responded to my intimate others well without their acknowledgement, at least *typically* (an issue to which I will return in section 3). When I wash the bottoms of pans to please

[7] See Bernard Williams, "Persons, Character and Morality," in *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973–1980*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1981), 1–19, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139165860; Susan Wolf, "'One Thought Too Many': Love, Morality, and the Ordering of Commitment," in *Luck, Value, and Commitment*, ed. Ulrike Heuer and Gerald Lang (Oxford University Press, 2012), 71–92, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199599325.003.0004. for discussions on commitment to moral justification.

my mother, it is a self-defeating act to *evaluate and determine* that "I have done well." My mother's acknowledgement that I indeed have met her standard is key to whether I have been relevantly relationally responsive. It is importantly axiomatic that she is the only and proper judge of whether I have met her standards, because it is her standard and her judgment that characteristically determines the case. I can certainly negotiate and debate with my mother, and even get her to agree that the mark on that stainless steel pan is burnt in and cannot be hand-washed away. It is also worth noting that acknowledgement from others can take a variety of forms, some of which may not contain any words of affirmation. For instance, one of my martial art teachers never gives me compliments regardless of how much effort I put in, but only expresses his disapproval. However, his disapproval is always targeted at areas where I need to improve, and he is always willing to provide his disapproval as long as I express interest in learning. Occasionally, he would even ask me if I want to learn more. It is a form of acknowledgement as continuous engagement that is peculiar to, yet recognized by, both of us. Negotiation and a variety of different kinds of acknowledgement, however, do not change the fact that intimate others hold certain degrees of determinative authority in evaluating and determining whether I have responded to them well. Therefore, my effort and my judgment in relational response constitute only part of the picture, with another part that is typically filled by intimate others (and sometimes, yet another part is filled by the public, a point to which I return later in the next section).

Second, outsiders' judgments are irrelevant and out of place in the private domain marked by idiosyncratic relational responses. Take, for example, the commonplace practice of giving and using intimate nicknames. These nicknames may arise out of different contexts, ranging from teasing to expressing love. However, once both parties acknowledge, use and

respond to the nicknames, they become an interpersonal language shared and valued in ways that are only understood by and relevant to those involved. It is not that outsiders do not know what the nicknames do or how to use them: Nicknames function both as names that refer to specific individuals and express much more than making a simple reference.[8] However, familiarity with the *general* use and practice of nicknames is perhaps what gives us a pause about using them as outsiders even if we know them – in addition to being a reference, nicknames often carry certain magnitude of significance unknown to outsiders. This significance can be shown when a breach in the typical pattern of usage occurs and registers a particular alarm to those involved. For instance, there are tiktok videos where lovers prank their partners by calling their partners not by their typical nicknames but by their first names. Unsurprisingly, some of the partners give fierce responses to such a breach of pattern. Whether such reactions are justified or not cannot and should not be evaluated by outsiders. It is not because outsiders cannot relate to the videos and get a sense of what causes the strong reaction. Rather, it is precisely because outsiders *can* relate and understand the private, interpersonal nature of assigning value and significance to those practices that outsiders cannot and should not make judgments. They know enough to know that they do not understand the significance, and thus, cannot make a judgment. It would also be inappropriate and disrespectful were outsiders to make judgments on cases so private. Thus, only those involved can make judgments of how well they are treated by each other in the exchanges of giving and receiving relational responses from each other.

[8] Here of course I am assuming an understanding and sensitive outsider who does not commit the mistake of using those intimate nicknames as an outsider. How to understand the mistake goes beyond the scope of this essay, and as far as I know, there is no dedicated scholarship on the use and misuse of nick names. Nonetheless, one may find resources in Grice's theory on sentence versus speaker's meaning and registers of language. See William G. Lycan, *Philosophy of Language*, 3rd edition, Routledge Contemporary Introductions to Philosophy (New York: Routledge, 2018), 90–102. I thank Chang Liu for this point.

3. Relational Response and Relational Virtue

What is the connection between relational response and relational virtue? To recapitulate, relational response names the behavioral exchange in intimate relationships where we tend to each other's individualities and mutually shared established practices. How well relational responses are given and received partly determines how fulfilling an intimate relationship is considered to be and can be only determined by those bonded in the relationship. If what I have argued is on the right track, giving and receiving relational responses well constitutes an important aspect of relational virtue, which, as Um argues, involves the functions of "developing, sustaining, deepening, and repairing the relationship with her intimates in an excellent way" (Um, 2021, p96). This is because relational response is but a detailed highlight of what is involved in sustaining and developing intimate relationships. Put differently, having relational virtue, being capable of sustaining and developing intimate relationship implies giving and receiving relational responses well. Giving and receiving relational responses well cannot be solely determined by oneself but involves acknowledgement from intimate others. This means that intimate others stand in a unique and irreplaceable position, such that their acknowledgement and endorsement partly determine whether one is relationally virtuous or not. In other words, relational virtue exists only relationally, with effort and attempts stemming from the disposition of one side and acknowledgement from the other side, even though it is conferred and awarded to the attempting side. Call this the argument based on relational response, or the argument of parameter and acknowledgement.

The conclusion that acknowledgement from intimate others partly determines whether an agent is relational virtuous or not is a controversial claim. I am saying nothing less than that individual disposition consists of only a part of relational virtue, with an additional, necessary

part being the acknowledgement and endorsement of intimate others, typically. Below, I elaborate and defend this claim by addressing 1) its strong commonsensical or even axiomatic appeal; 2) its controversial aspect; and 3) a misunderstanding.

First, there is a strong intuitive appeal to my view. In all kinds of intimate relationships, how good we are as a participant is partly determined by others who are involved. My brother has a say in whether I have been a good brother to him. My friends partly determine whether I have been a good friend. If I boast of myself as being a good son while my mother disagrees, my claim is not only marred and doubted, but likely wholly rejected and denied. My relationships with my brother, friends or parents are relationships where I am but one of the participants. Whether I have been an excellent participant – namely, whether I have relational virtue – is not a matter that can be in principle determined by me alone. This is because whether I have been an excellent participant in a relationship concretely means whether I have been good to others involved, which, as discussed above, involves relational response that give attention not only to the general welfare of others, but to the particularities that make intimate others unique individuals who have bonded with us. Intimate others open themselves to us with their unique, peculiar individualities, and these, in turn, become part of the parameters of what is required for a relationally virtuous agent. These intimate parameters are private, personal, and often a matter of individual or interpersonal preference that lie beyond the realm of moral rightness, wrongness, and justification. Whether one has responded to these parameters well, therefore and again, is not an open matter that can be evaluated by anyone capable of rational deliberation, but a private matter determined by the source of those parameters, namely, intimate others. Consequently, this commonsensical piece of knowledge of whether I have been a good spouse, friend, and relative

is partly determined by the bonded others seems to me axiomatically true, especially in normal circumstances that constitute the regularity of our lives.

Second, what makes my claim controversial is that it goes against many versions, including the standard account, of virtue ethics. A standard account of virtue ethics does not take the judgment of others to be necessary and constitutive of virtue. All that is required for having a virtue is having the right kind of disposition. Consider Um's account on relational virtue, which goes the furthest in emphasizing the significance of intimate relationships among contemporary discussions.

Um clearly states, and I agree, that "a relational virtue cannot be fully understood without reference to the particular type of intimate relationship and it presupposes and can be properly cultivated or exercised only within that relationship" (Um, 2021, p96). This underscores that relational virtue is rooted in intimate relationships, rather than targeted towards an unrelated public or unspecified, generic recipient (e.g., generosity) or even generalizable relational values (e.g. loyalty). In Um's words, relational virtues are not unilateral but "presuppose particular intimate relationships between the virtue-agent—i.e., one who exercises the virtue—and the virtue-patient—i.e., the intentional object of the virtue" (Um, 2021, p99). One of the implications of Um's account is that relational virtues can only be developed and exercised within an intimate relationship. To further illustrate how relational virtue is different from general, other-regarding virtues such as benevolence and generosity, Um uses an analogy of a team sport, basketball. General virtues are akin to overall valuable traits such as speed and strength, while relational virtues are akin to being good players on a team, athletically interacting with one's fellow players well. The point of Um's analogy is not that being relationally virtuous necessarily implies having the virtues of benevolence and generosity (in the way that a good basketball

player necessarily has good strength and speed), but that relational virtues are specifically tailored towards and dependent upon intimate relations, much like good basketball players only exist in reference to their playing well with the teammates they have. Um draws a further implication. Similar to how a good basketball player cannot win the game if her teammates are not skillful and cooperative, a relationally virtuous agent cannot by herself "make the relationship an ideal one" without the "other participant's relational virtuousness" (Um, 2021, p103).

Um's inspiration for this paper is obvious. I am fully on board with Um's claim that relational virtues presuppose intimate relationship. I also agree that a good relationship depends on the relational virtuousness of all participants. My disagreement comes from a further consideration of the Um's claim that relational virtues presuppose intimate relationship.

I contend that in an intimate relationship, having relational virtue includes more than having the disposition to take good care of others. It also requires being acknowledged by others as taking good care of them, if not more (in unfortunate cases, to which I will return in section 3). The latter point about acknowledgement is the locus of controversy of this paper and where I differ from Um. One serious problem for this view concerns a standard challenge regarding moral luck for virtues in general. Roughly, given that the success of virtuous actions often falls out of an agent's control and is subject to the chance happenings of external conditions, a realistic and practically plausible account of virtue should not take the successful result of virtuous action to be a necessary requirement of virtue.[9] I argue that while this line of thinking may be reasonably applied to other virtues, it cannot well capture relational virtues. That is, the

[9] See Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge* (New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 176–84 for a related discussion on reliable success as a necessary component for intellectual virtue (and virtues in general).

idea that I could have relational virtue *and* serious bad luck such that I have never been acknowledged by others is incoherent.

Consider the virtue of courage and the problem moral luck poses to a blessed solider who lives in a peaceful era. Because of the era in which she lives and despite her outstanding performance in training, she never displays the exemplary courage in battle of which she is capable. Because she has never been to actual battle, she may doubt whether she is exemplarily courageous or not. Importantly, such doubts only raise questions but imply no clear answer, because lacking the opportunity to demonstrate her courage results from external factors beyond her control. Were there circumstances that could allow her to bring forth her internal dispositions, she could have been acknowledged as the exemplarily courageous agent she always has been. Never having the opportunity for an exemplary demonstration of courage does not imply a lack of exemplary courage, for such demonstration requires a matching of internal dispositions with external conditions, conditions which are bounded by luck.

Never having been acknowledged by certain others in relationships, however, differs importantly from never displaying exemplary courage, for it does entail that such a person cannot have relational virtues. While courage may be trained and developed outside of a battlefield, relational virtue only develops within intimate relationships. Never having been acknowledged by others entails that such person has never developed any intimate relationship, and therefore, cannot possibly possess relational virtue. First, allow me to elaborate on why acknowledgement from others matters.

As discussed earlier, acknowledgement from others in a relationship can take various forms, ranging from openly expressed approval to openly expressed disapproval (as in the case of one of my martial art teachers). Whatever form it takes, acknowledgement gives a response

that marks a willingness and openness to be a part of the relationship that even if the relationship may not be going smoothly at the moment, intimate others are willing to put in effort, time, and energy to sustain, amend, and develop the relationship. As long as a relationship continues, bonded people will give various forms of acknowledgement to each other. Thus, having acknowledgement from others does not imply a "perfect success" in being relationally virtuous, but does mean that the bonded others are willing to be a part of the relationship. Conversely, lacking acknowledgement – whether coming in the form of direct denial or silent withholding of acknowledgment – indicates an endpoint to the relationship, operating as a sign that others are no longer willing to participant in this joint project. This seems true not only for intimate relationships, but also for new relationships with slight modifications.

To speak concretely, suppose I am trying to form a new friendship with an acquaintance who just moved to the town where I live and am trying to help her getting around and setting down. If she responds "yes" to some of my helps, asks more questions about some issues I mention, and rejects my help for other things, I know from her responses that I could develop a friendship with this person. This is because even though she rejects to some of my offers, she is willing to interact and receive helps from me, indicating a level of acknowledgement and openness that makes friendship possible. If, on the other hand, all my helps were responded with either overt or tacit rejections, it is a clear that this new acquaintance does not want to become a friend with me, and I should leave. If I want to become closer to a new friend of mine and asks her to spend time together during free time, but only receive rejects after multiple attempts, it is clear that this new friend does not have interests in further developing a relationship. If what is said seems plausible, lacking acknowledgement from *all* others means that no one is willing to put effort in continuing or developing relationships with the agent. It means that the agent utterly

lacks developed relationships of any degree. Lacking acknowledgement from intimate others, similarly, means that the agent has no intimate relationships.

Thus, acknowledgement from others differs from successful demonstration of courage in that even though both register as certain degrees of success for respective virtues, acknowledgement further serves as the developmental precondition for relational virtue. It is a constitutive and necessary component for developing any intimate relationships with deep exchanges and for the development of private communications and histories. Only through being involved in intimate relationships can one cultivate relational virtues where one receives and gives cares at highly idiosyncratic levels. Acknowledgement cannot be reduced to a matter of luck and opportunity, nor can failure to be acknowledged be ascribed to a mismatch in internal dispositions and external conditions. Rather, acknowledgement is a necessary element in developing an intimate relationship where one may learn and develop relational virtue. From this line of reasoning, saying that an agent can be relationally virtuous while never having been recognized by anyone due to bad luck is like saying that a tree has strong and stout branches despite never having taken root in any soil. Both are nonsensical and mysterious, detached from how relationships or trees in fact grow. What this implies is not that an agent must be recognized by *all* related others in order to have relational virtues. But it does mean that she must be recognized by *some* to have the *chance* of becoming relationally virtuous.

Shrewd readers might notice that my argument above is an argument of developmental necessity that, because it is only about the cultivation process, does not make claims about relational virtues themselves, or more concretely, the significance of others' acknowledgement when an agent has attained a high degree of relational virtues. My other argument of parameters and acknowledgement, however, seems to suggest that others' acknowledgement is *constitutive*,

rather than simply being necessary for development. It is true that for my view, acknowledgement from intimate others is not merely necessary for development. It constitutes part of relational virtue even when an agent has developed a high degree of relational virtues, and there is no proper relational virtue to speak of if an agent does not have any acknowledgement from intimate others.[10] To see why this is the case, an example may suffice.

Through previous intimate relationships, Sam has fully developed the relational virtue of being a good friend, but unfortunately she has now, through a series of tragedies, lost all her intimate friends, such that no one acknowledges her relational virtue now. Sam, in other words, is not a good friend to anyone at this point in the story. She has no one to whom to express her relational virtue. Suppose, however, that Sam recovers from her loss and makes some new friends, would Sam be able to express her relational virtue now that she has new friends? I think that no, she would not. This is because she must first develop an intimate relationship with her new friends. While Sam has the disposition, this disposition alone and by itself does not enable her to immediately create intimate and close relationships, even if we assume that her new friends would like to become her close friends. The disposition will certainly play an important role. However, it is precisely because Sam *has* the disposition that she knows that the relational virtue of being a good friend – which entails being a good friend to *someone* (or multiple people), rather than having a generically friendly or considerate comportment – is *not* a portable virtue that once possessed, will make having intimate friendship with anyone possible and smooth. She understands what is required to know and befriend someone in their individualities. It takes humility to resist passing quick judgments over what may seem strange and to take to

[10] Again, I will return to the abnormal cases such as an abusive husband, an insatiable and ungrateful friend, parents suffering from dementia, and so on in the "Caveat and Qualification" section.

heart that one can be wrong in one's judgment. It takes courage and vulnerability to reveal oneself and to lose a certain control in order to adjust and change oneself for others. Moreover, she knows, more than those with a less-developed disposition, that all of these only draw part of the picture, for no disposition contains all that is necessary to establish a new intimate relationship with another person when many of the necessary details – namely, the individualities of pet peeves, quirks, values and desires of bonded others—can only come from others. Disregarding all these details, what is left is not a friendship but a relationship with a non-specified acquaintance, not the relational virtue of being a good friend but a general virtue, such as kindness or friendliness. Valuing individual details that intimates share and desiring relational virtue, Sam needs her friends to acknowledge and respond to her initiations, and to take part in similar manners to understand and trust her and reveal themselves to her. Only with their acknowledgements and contributions can Sam gradually redevelop her relational virtue and act in a deeply relational way that goes beyond generic interactions among new acquaintances. Saying that having a well-developed disposition alone suffices for having a relational virtue presents a misunderstanding of how relational virtue must be achieved. It is a kind of disposition that is necessary but characteristically insufficient for having corresponding relational virtue.

Last but not least, the focus of my discussion thus far may lead to a misunderstanding that for intimate relationships and relational virtue, everything involved is private and not open to evaluation by anyone outside of the relationships. One might think, for instance, that I am arguing for a view in which no one, including our parents, can question or criticize how my brother and I interact as long as both of us consider our interaction fine. While I do emphasize that there is a highly exclusive part to every intimate relationship, I have been careful to avoid saying that everything about an intimate relationship is private. Rather, the private, exclusive,

and deeply relational part of an intimate relationship is but a part of the whole. There are also parts of an intimate relationship that are public and can be openly evaluated. Take child-rearing, for example. Being good parents is highly relational. It requires knowing all the quirks and unique personalities of a child and trying to meet the child's individual needs, even and perhaps especially those needs that no one else knows. However, pediatricians can provide a lot of important information about child-rearing without knowing much about anything particular about every child who visits them. Sometimes, neighbors with neither professional knowledge about young children nor intimate knowledge about *your* child can justifiably say that "*you* are spoiling your kid." Intimate relationships and relational virtue, therefore, have areas and activities that are open to public discussion and evaluation, and are not completely private and exclusive to those involved.

Public acknowledgement and evaluations are indispensable for evaluating and determining whether an agent has relational virtue. In case what I argue seems redundant and bizarre, considering public acknowledgment and evaluation as necessary is practiced and assumed de facto. Those of us in philosophy take our public discourse on virtues as relevant for determining and refining what a particular virtue is, a project in which this paper also partakes. Humility calls for a check on how important our discourse actually is, though it seems undeniable that discussions of what is good and bad, or what should and should not be done, are generally important and relevant for understanding and redefining virtues. When it comes to relational virtue, public acknowledgement and evaluation provide a necessary guard rail against intimate but toxic relationships that either satisfy those involved or were considered to be appropriate in previous eras. Thus, regarding relational virtue (and virtues in general), even

though the necessity of public judgment most often manifests in high-level discussions or when clear problems occur, it is nonetheless necessary.

Which public discourses should be considered relevant and salient? How might we identify and filter what matters from what does not? These are difficult and important questions that await further exploration. Pertinent to this paper is the question of how they matter for relational virtues. What do we say when two sources of acknowledgment – namely, the one from intimate others and one from a public source – conflict? While I have been emphasizing the significance of intimate others, what do we say when those bonded others turn bad, or are ungrateful for all that one has done for them? In what follows, I answer these questions after discussing a case of misery.

4. Caveats and Qualifications

There are unfortunate cases of abusive spouses, ungrateful and unstable friends or siblings, relatives with strong, problematic beliefs, or parents who suffer from medical conditions such as dementia and become neuro-biologically "not who they were" anymore. As diverse as these cases are, one common feature shared by all of them is that the intimate relationship is now broken and gone, regardless of how it was before. These cases seem to challenge my view that acknowledgement from intimate others is necessary, since agents in these cases either cannot receive or should not credit acknowledgement from intimate others. I argue that the opposite is the case, that these cases, because they are unfortunate and atypical, further support my view. First, let me present one such case. Then I will offer what seems to me a reasonable analysis of such cases.

Take, for instance, the extreme case of parents suffering from late-stage dementia. It is extreme for numerous reasons, not least of which is that our assumed, typical expectations of a

person as capable of reasoning and change are inapplicable to them. Reciprocity is near-impossible, and care-givers can only offer unidirectional activities of giving and caring. If the child previously had an intimate relationship with the parents, it is a particularly excruciating task for her to take care of parents in such a case. Loving parents may, all of a sudden, enact aggressions to a level that in no way matches with who they were before.[11] When the damage is done, the child now faces a contradiction: keen memories of who the parents were, on the one hand, and the cold, alienating, and utterly scary being who takes the "form" of parents, on the other hand. She could leave the responsibility of caretaking to specialized facilities and let them take full control of the parents if she has the resources. While that would not be relationally virtuous, for she is not engaging in any kind of care-taking activities, it is not clearly blameworthy. She could take up the responsibility and do it poorly. The alienating disease tortures not only the patients, but the heart of caretakers, such that a child may also "give in" to the disease, and treat the late-stage parents *not* as how the parents would have liked to be treated before they fell ill, but as an unfeeling, confused, unstable being who is not much more than an incredible burden. Lastly, she could take up the responsibility and the daunting task of doing it well, which, alongside following medical advice, may consistently imply providing them with food they used to enjoy eating, speaking in the only language that hangs on the edge of their memory, and, in general, tending to their old quirks and preferences within reasonable measures, treating them as if they are still "there," even during the (literally) violent times. She could, in other words, behave relationally virtuously even though she would not (and should not expect to) receive any acknowledgement from parents.

[11] I thank multiple people who were willing to share with me their own stories or stories of someone they knew, which allows me to present the following narrative. If there are any insights, they come from my dear friends. Errors certainly are my own.

It is the last scenario that I want to discuss and let us call this imaginary child Jesse. Jesse's case seems a readily recognizable case where we as non-related outsiders would happily say that she is relationally virtuous, and I agree. Jesse has tried to take care of a parent whose disease has prevented them from giving Jesse any of the acknowledgement she both wants and deserves. Nevertheless, Jesse resists the temptation to treat her parents as the uncanny beings they now are, and continues to take care of them based on how they would have preferred based on her intimate knowledge of them. To deny that Jesse is relationally virtuous as a good child (or *xiao* 孝 in Chinese philosophy), is to render this particular relational virtue exceptionally demanding and therefore, to take away any practical significance this could have in real life. However, acknowledging that Jesse is relationally virtuous despite having no acknowledgement from her ill parents is not a mark against my view. On the contrary, Jesse's case further strengthens my view that both acknowledgments from intimate others and from the public are necessary components that standard relational virtues should have. The crux is on the nature of Jesse's case.

What we recognize in Jesse's case is not only that she is relationally virtuous. Perhaps even before that, we see Jesse as suffering from a great misfortune that her parents have late-stage dementia. We cannot help but imagine how much better it would be if Jesse's parents were fine and healthy. Arguably, we may (or at least I think Jesse would) think that it would be better for Jesse's whole family to have the parents healthy than to have Jesse displaying relational virtue in such an agonizing circumstance. If Jesse were not as nice to her parents before they had fallen ill as she is now, she would most definitely wish that she were relationally virtuous to her parents when they were healthy and would consider that to be a much better alternative than her being relationally virtuous to her parents now.

If what I describe seem right, this means that Jesse's relational virtue to her ill parents is atypical and not the ideal kind. Moreover, we acknowledge from Jesse's atypical relational virtue what the ideal kind should be. Compared to Jesse trying hard to take care of ill parents who can no longer respond to her, it seems a much better alternative if Jesse can be relationally virtuous to her healthy parents, precisely because they could acknowledge and respond to Jesse's caring. The ideal kind, therefore, is one in which those involved can, and do, acknowledge and respond to each other. The absence of acknowledgment from intimate others in a well-recognized relational virtue, therefore, does not imply that acknowledgement from intimate others is unnecessary, but marks a tragedy that demonstrates how irreplaceable it is for those involved.

Furthermore, because Jesse's attention is most likely not on evaluating and affirming herself as relationally virtuous, *we* as the public are those who confer on her the relational virtue. We clearly see in Jesse an admirable quality evidenced through her care-taking acts and consider that quality worthy of being considered a "relational virtue." Our evaluation of Jesse is important because we as the public are the only group left for determining and identifying what counts as relational virtue when her parents cease to be capable judges of her virtue. Without this public evaluation and conferral, Jesse's virtue would not only go unnoticed, but even be wrongly identified as vice by her parents. Her parents, whom Jesse may block from unsafe activities they desire, such as driving, may well turn on her, judging Jesse bad or vicious. This is why I contend that public acknowledgement and evaluation is also a necessary component for relational virtue. In addition to serving as a guard rail against clear wrongs, updating our understandings of what is good and right, public acknowledgement and evaluation can credit agents when intimate others are unable to do so.

In Jesse's case, public evaluation is more creditable than Jesse's parents' evaluation for determining whether Jesse is relationally virtuous. However, how significant public evaluation is for relational virtue overall is quite a different matter. Imagine us telling Jesse right after her parents' dismissive reaction to her caring that "please do not take to heart what they said. We think you have done well. In fact, you have acted virtuously." Jesse, while being moved, may respond that "but I want *them* to know that I have really tried hard (to take care of them)." In other words, for those who have lost the possibility of connecting with their intimately bonded persons, what they long for is not the public acknowledgement of their virtuousness, but acknowledgement from intimate others. This seems true not only from a first-person perspective, but from the nature of relational virtue as well. After all, relational virtues are *relational* rather than general. What matters most would be acknowledgment from one's intimates, rather than those from the public.

If the discussion of Jesse's case is on the right track, we can draw the following conclusions about the relationship of the three components of relational virtues. In the typical and therefore, majority of the circumstances in our lives, where relationship participants are neither exemplarily virtuous nor irredeemably vicious, the public guard rail will rarely interfere. An agent's disposition and acknowledgement from intimate others consist of the necessary and most important components of relational virtue. Public evaluation "takes a backseat" in that the preferences of intimate others often (though not always) take priority over any general moral consensus regarding right and wrong on matters with no serious moral import. For instance, if my quite elderly grandmother hates being treated and cared for as an "old lady" because it makes her feel that she "has one foot in the grave," I should treat her the way she prefers and not help

her with the four grocery bags she has in her hand.[12] Public evaluation becomes relevant when the relationship of intimately bonded people is broken, either because of disease, death, or other extreme life circumstances, or because one (or some) of them commits clear moral wrong against others.[13] In such cases, public evaluation can not only challenge the judgment from intimates, but even overrule this judgment in determining whether an agent is relationally virtuous. Nonetheless publicly conferred relational virtue rarely carries much significance for the agent. After all, relational virtues are meant to facilitate and foster deep and enriching relationships, rather than being a civic or general virtue that inspires outsiders for moral cultivation, or providing guidance to universal standards of right or wrong.[14]

5. Conclusion and Implications

Traditional virtue ethics theories take disposition to be the necessary and sufficient factor in determining whether an agent has virtue or not. I have argued for a strong version of relational virtue that consists of three components: the appropriate disposition of the agent, acknowledgement from intimate others, and acknowledgment from the public. This means that disposition alone does not determine whether an agent has relational virtue, and acknowledgements from intimate others and the public are also necessary. Of the two sources of acknowledgment, acknowledgement from intimate others is especially important (and typically, more important than acknowledgement from the public), and I provided three arguments for this claim. They are, first, the argument from parameters and the judgment that part of the parameters

[12] I thank Amy Olberding for providing this vivid example.

[13] Public evaluation also becomes relevant when some of the intimately related commits grave moral mistakes against outsiders, which presents others in the relationship difficult moral challenges. There are serious problems involved in this kind of cases that go beyond the scope of this paper.

[14] This, as Confucian scholars might notice, implies quite a different interpretation of the key Confucian relational virtue of *xiao* 孝, which is supposed to have significant civic and political implications, especially in ancient China. Thus, my view can support a modern development of *xiao* 孝 that focuses on the relationship between parents and child and takes away its now-irrelevant civic and political implications.

of what it means to be a good relationship participant is set by the bonded others. They are the only proper judge on whether one has met the parameters well. Second, I provide an argument regarding developmental necessity. Acknowledgement from intimate others presents the basic precondition for relational virtue because it is required for developing an intimate relationship, the field and ground for developing relational virtue. Third, I offer an argument from the disposition belonging to relational virtue. Because relational virtue is not a general virtue (such as compassion or friendliness) that targets general public, but a tailored virtue involving particular individuals, its disposition involves an understanding that others – including their acknowledgement and contribution – are needed for making an agent relationally virtuous. At the core of all three arguments is an understanding that having relational virtue, or more concretely, being a good relationship participant to a definite and particular individual (or individuals) is not a unilateral project that can be achieved by a single person, but a joint project that involves all participants at a deep personal level in a reciprocal manner. Even in the extreme cases where misfortune has stripped away the possibility of having acknowledgement from intimate others, the atypical relational virtue still reveals why acknowledgment from intimate others is irreplaceable, and why public acknowledgement is necessary but weaker in its significance as a substitute.

My view finds some of its implications in virtues that have the well-being of other people as its intentional object, such as generosity. Christian Miller has recently provided a preliminary account of generosity. He argues that

> A person has the virtue of generosity only if she is disposed to perform actions, in a variety of different relevant situations and stably over time, which are such that:

(i) What is bestowed by the actions is of value to the giver.

(ii) The actions are motivated by an ultimate desire that is altruistic, and

in the case of mixed motives this desire is primary and capable of leading to these actions even in the absence of the other motives.

(iii) The actions are morally supererogatory and not morally required.[15]

While Miller's account sheds lights on the virtue of generosity, I wonder whether there needs to be an additional condition given the nature of generosity being an other-regarding virtue.

Generosity does not require any intimate relationship, and therefore, is significantly different from relational virtues. However, given that generosity is about roughly, giving to others, it is similar to relational virtues in the sense that it too involves joint projects. It too, therefore, seems to need certain kind of participation from the broadly related others, namely, recipients. Given that the project of being generous does not need to be tailored to idiosyncratic needs of involved individuals, the kind of participation from recipients can take a highly different and general form, and the judgment from them may also have different weight. However, it seems bizarre to think that generosity only requires good dispositions of the agent without any regard for the recipients. Specifically, it seems bizarre to say that generosity need not consider whether the donation is needed by recipients. This is not saying that only well-received acts are generous acts, which, as Miller points out, is unreasonable. Rather, this is saying that the need of recipients should be given basic and practically plausible considerations to avoid making a generous donation into a disaster on the receiving end. After all, when donated clothes from the U.S. become landfill in Ghana, it is hard to say that such acts are generous, or so

[15] Christian B. Miller, "Generosity: A Preliminary Account of a Surprisingly Neglected Virtue," *Metaphilosophy* 49, no. 3 (April 2018): 231, https://doi.org/10.1111/meta.12298.

it seem to me.[16] This modification of generosity certain does not guarantee that every thus-defined generous donation would be successful. But to offload this kind of consideration of others to the realm of out-of-control luck seems to offload too much. If this line of reasoning seem reasonable, that generosity can (and perhaps, even should) receive an added condition of other people's participation, many other-regarding virtues can also be modified and add one more component, namely other people's involvement. Our need for others to become virtuous, therefore, may exist beyond relational virtue, but is a basic condition for many virtues after all.

[16] There are numerous reports on clothes donation becoming landfills. See for instance https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-08-12/fast-fashion-turning-parts-ghana-into-toxic-landfill/100358702

Bibliography

Carrasco, Maria A. “Morality, Impartiality and Due Partialities.” *Journal of Value Inquiry* 49, no. 4 (2015): 667–89. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10790-015-9523-8.

Darwell, Stephen. “Responsibility within Relations.” In *Partiality and Impartiality*, edited by Brian Feltham and John Cottingham, 150–68. Oxford University Press, 2010. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199579952.001.0001.

Kellenberger, James. *Relationship Morality*. University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995.

Keller, Simon. *Partiality*. Princeton Monographs in Philosophy. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.

Kolodny, Niko. “Which Relationships Justify Partiality? General Considerations and Problem Cases.” In *Partiality and Impartiality*, edited by Brian Feltham and John Cottingham, 169–93. Oxford University Press, 2010. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199579952.001.0001.

———. “Which Relationships Justify Partiality? The Case of Parents and Children.” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 38, no. 1 (January 2010): 37–75. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1088-4963.2009.01173.x.

Lord, Errol. “Justifying Partiality.” *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 19, no. 3 (2016): 569–90.

Lycan, William G. *Philosophy of Language*. 3rd edition. Routledge Contemporary Introductions to Philosophy. New York: Routledge, 2018.

Miller, Christian B. “Generosity: A Preliminary Account of a Surprisingly Neglected Virtue.” *Metaphilosophy* 49, no. 3 (April 2018): 216–45. https://doi.org/10.1111/meta.12298.

Um, Sungwoo. “Solving the Puzzle of Partiality.” *Journal of Social Philosophy* 52, no. 3 (2021): 362–76. https://doi.org/10.1111/josp.12367.

———. “What Is a Relational Virtue?” *Philosophical Studies* 178, no. 1 (January 1, 2021): 95–111. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-020-01422-1.

Williams, Bernard. “Persons, Character and Morality.” In *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973–1980*, 1st ed., 1–19. Cambridge University Press, 1981. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139165860.

Wolf, Susan. “‘One Thought Too Many’: Love, Morality, and the Ordering of Commitment.” In *Luck, Value, and Commitment*, edited by Ulrike Heuer and Gerald Lang, 71–92. Oxford University Press, 2012. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199599325.003.0004.

Zagzebski, Linda Trinkaus. *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge*. New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I present three distinct papers connected through the theme of control. The first two papers focus on debates in early Chinese philosophy. The first paper argues for the significance of worry in the Confucian moral cultivation program. The second paper argues for an account of humility based on the *Analects*. The third paper is a project engaging with contemporary debates about virtue. It argues for an account of relational virtue that considers the acknowledgement of intimate others necessary and significant. All three papers are connected through a focus on the area of life where we neither have full control nor have no control over the outcomes of our actions, our emotions, or our identities. Rather, we exert a certain amount of control but also depend upon others for what we do, how we feel, and who we are.

The dissertation expansively leads to multiple additional projects waiting to be further explored. On the more historical side, I have argued in the introduction of this dissertation why a continuum of control is a better analytic tool than a dichotomy of control for interpreting the *Analects*. However, I have not developed a more elaborate account that demonstrates how this new interpretive approach can re-interpret traditional issues regarding wealth, fame, and status. Replacing the standard dichotomy with a continuum implies that these items, which are traditionally considered to be out of agent's control, need to be re-categorized. It seems to me that commonsense dictates that these items belong in the ambiguous middle section of a continuum, which is to say that they are subject to our control, but always only partially. How to understand these items anew and develop a new normative stance regarding them presents one set of future projects.

There are other sets of potential projects related to the first paper, where I argue that learning to worry well is a part of the Confucian cultivation program. If I am right that learning

to worry well is part of the training regime, it is unlikely for sages who have learned to worry broadly and deeply about the right kind of things to be worry-free. There are at least two related but distinct projects here. First, if sages have deep worries in their psychological composition, this suggests one important argument regarding the value of worry: that the emotion of worry is not simply a negative emotion to be discarded once an agent reaches a high level of cultivation, but is deeply significant and indispensable even for sages. Second, a worried, concerned sage presents a model of sage-hood that is uncommon, to say the least. Understanding how a sage can be worried yet also possess the typical sagely qualities, such as equanimity and joy, invites questions worthy of multiple projects, one of which is to present a psychologically plausible account of how a person can be both concerned and composed.[1]

Another future project addresses issues elaborating the Confucian conception of moral luck briefly indicated in one of my dissertation papers. Much contemporary scholarly discussion of moral luck assumes a dichotomy between what is in one's control and what is out of one's control, and seeks to trace implications for considering moral responsibility. If I am right that the Confucians indeed conceive "control" in terms of degrees rather than in terms of dichotomy, their concerns about moral luck diverge from the mainstream of contemporary discussions on the topic, or so I will argue. For instance, regarding the implications of moral luck, what concerns the Confucians would be unlikely to track Nagel's question of whether we have agency at all, but instead will highlight how to respond to the influence of moral luck. Numerous projects can stem from such an initial observation. One project is to further investigate the Confucians' strategy in

[1] While this may seem contradictory at first, humans do seem capable of having contradictory emotions at the same time, such as being at once happy and sad. Thus, the project is

dealing with and addressing failures happening in the grey area where responsibilities cannot be clearly assigned. Minimally, this project rejects from the outset the idea that Confucians are similar to the Stoics in how they conceptualize affairs in the world, an idea that continues to hold sway in current scholarship.